

UNIVERSITY OF TARTU

Pärnu College

Department of Tourism Studies

Laxmi Khadka

**THE SIGNIFICANCE OF EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING  
WHILE DELIVERING WELLNESS AND SPA SERVICES**

Master's Thesis

Supervisor: - Melanie K.Smith,PhD

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## INTRODUCTION

Around the world, there is growing interest in changing the way people take care of themselves- not just the body, but also the mind, spirit, society, and planet (Global Spa Submit, 2010). Years ago people would attend a spa and expect a beauty treatment or facial. The emphasis has now changed with more focus on relaxation and holistic treatments (Cohen and Bodeker, 2008). They mention that the wellness and spa industry is becoming a melting pot for people to enhance their health and well-being. The wellness and spa industry is a new and growing phenomenon showing a clear increase over the last decade. Customers are starting to realize the important of health and wellness in today's society Chenoweth (2011). Wellness and spa have become a pertinent cultural force, influencing not only how consumers manage their health, appearance, and stress, but also how consumers socialize, spiritualize, travel, and work Scott's studies (as cited in Yusoff, 2010). Rising levels of income, education, and sophistication among travelers and consumers worldwide have dramatically elevated the consciousness and desirability of spa treatments.

The wellness and spa industry is a high-touch industry where people are the products (Cohen & Bodeker, 2008). Therefore, high demand for the wellness and spa industry requires a greater number of specialized staff with appropriate qualifications. Human capital is at the heart of the successful enterprise, especially in the hospitality industry (Lever, 2002). Despite the fact that the employee is at the heart of the wellness and spa industry, employee well-being and workplace well-being is a highly neglected area. Today, more than ever, employees are experiencing significant workplace health and wellness issues such as; occupational stress, depression, anxiety, poor performance, burnout, musculoskeletal disorders, difficulty concentrating, being creative and sleep issues (Blaug, Kenyon, & Lekhi, 2007 and Burton 2010). Workplace stress is one other consideration that affects wellness and spa services. The evidence is mounting that the stress arising from the workplace is a major contributor to many of the other chronic conditions that cause the huge cost of healthcare, low productivity and high absenteeism.

Nepal has great potential to offer a broad range of wellness and spa services. However the Nepali wellness and spa industries are little known. At present the Nepali wellness and spa industries are only limited to Kathmandu Valley. However, there is room for them to expand into tourist destinations like Pokhara, Sauraha, and the trekking areas mentions Hem Nath Regmi, Secretary of SWAN (Spa Wellness Association of Nepal, 2010). The main reason the Nepali wellness and spa industries are little known is because Nepali society has traditionally viewed the wellness and spa industry as an unclean workplace says Bhuban Phaiju (Director of Tranquility Spa, 2010). Additionally, in general, the working conditions and working environment is not favorable to employee well-being. Due to this fact people who work in the wellness and spa industry have been facing several problems that influence the individual's well-being, and it directly and indirectly affects the services that hold the industry behind. On the other hand, there has not been any academic research on employee well-being in the wellness and spa industry in the context of Nepal. Therefore, it is essential to understand the needs of the employees to maintain their well-being, as well as well-being of the industry and the society.

Bringing in mind all the proceeds above, this paper ask “what are the major factors that influences employee well-being and how it affects the services in context of the Nepali wellness and spa industry”. The aim of this research is to understand the Nepali wellness and spa industry and to explore the factors that influence employee's well-being. The results will be used to provide recommendations to Nepali wellness and spa industry to improve employee's well-being. The following objectives are set for this research paper:

- ❖ To understand the importance of employee's well-being and the major factors that influences employee's well- being within general wellness and spa industry through existing literature.
- ❖ To find out the major factors that influence employee well-being within the Nepali wellness and spa industry.

As mentioned above Human Resources in the context of the wellness and spa industry is a neglected area. For this reason, this thesis will contribute to the current gap of knowledge concerning employee well-being in the context of the Nepali wellness and

spa industry as well as within the general wellness and spa industry. It will provide insight into actual factors that influence employee well-being and outline the consequences.

In order to achieve the goal of this master's thesis, the research was undertaken among the spa managers, therapists and guests of five big spas in Nepal by using mixed methods. Questionnaires (open-ended and closed-ended) and semi-structured interviews were chosen as a data collection method for this research. Non-probability convenience sample method was used to gain access to the target population. There were total 100 employees and 150 guests filled the questionnaires, and ten spa managers gave the Skype interview.

The first main chapter of the thesis emphasizes the theoretical background and literature related to the wellness and spa industry and employee well-being. First, wellness and spa industry are described in detail by using several authors' concepts like Cohen and Bodecker (2008), Smith and Kelly (2006), and Pilzner (2002). The second part of the literature focuses on the importance of human resources in the wellness and spa industry by several authors. Major authors are Cohen and Bodeker (2008), Baum and Lockstone-Binney (2012), Nickson (2007), and Bolton (2004). The third and fourth parts concentrate on the general definition of employee well-being and what actual well-being means to the employees. The major authors on this topic are Brinkman (2002), Page et al. (2009), Dodge et al. (2012) and Hater et al. (2002). The final part is concisely focused on factors that influence employee well-being. The major authors for this topic are Nielsen et al, (2008), Armstrong (2009), Nobet et al (2008), and Chan (2012).

The second part of this thesis focuses on justification of the selected research methodology and discusses the nature of research and its methods. It explains data collection process and presents data analysis. The third part illustrates the result and discussion of the research. The third part is followed by the conclusion of this work, presenting key findings, outlining some limitations and making suggestions to improve employee well-being as well as the suggestion for the further research. This Master's Thesis is ended with references, appendices and summary in Nepali Language

# **1. WELLNESS AND SPA EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING**

## **1.1 Wellness and Spa industry**

Wellness and spa services have become the third most accessed resources for enhancing or maintaining wellness globally (after exercise and eating better) (Global Spa Summit, 2010). In other word, wellness and spa services play a significant role to improve overall health for the majority of people. Therefore, the wellness and spa industry is growing rapidly. Spas are defined as establishments that promote wellness through the provision of therapeutic and other professional services aimed at renewing the body, mind, and spirit (Global Spa Summit, 2010). In other words, a spa is an establishment that focuses on the promotion of wellness. Additionally, Oxford Dictionary (2013) defines spa as a commercial establishment offering health and beauty treatment such as steam bath, exercise, and massage.

Over the years, spa industries have expanded to cover any place, facility, product, treatment or solution that is connected, however loosely, with physical, mental or spiritual health. DeVerville (2003) defines spa as a place whose purpose is facilitating whole human health care, wellness, and social wellbeing. (Global Spa Summit 2010), Describes spas as establishments that promote wellness through therapeutic and other professional services aimed at renewing the body, mind, and spirit. Similarly the ISPA (2013) views spa as places that encourage the renewal of mind, body and spirit. As clearly seen from these spa definitions spa has moved away from including water and aligned them more with the wellness industry by suggesting that holistic wellbeing plays a critical role in the spa setting. Holistic well-being goes far beyond than materialistic gain. The pursuit of worldly possessions and wealth does not give lasting happiness and fulfillment. Instead, it increases people's dissatisfaction, depression, anxiety, anger, isolation and alienation (Kasser, 2002; Eckersley, 2005). So, holistic wellbeing is the inner happiness and peace and balance between body, mind, and soul.

Pilzner (2002) has captured this emerging business phenomenon in the wellness revolution. He views wellness as an industry, not a concept and highlights how the wellness industry differentiates itself from the conventional healthcare sector.

Furthermore, he considers wellness business is proactive where healthy people voluntarily become customers to feel healthier, to reduce the effects of aging, and to avoid becoming consumers of the sickness business. Pilzner 2002 also labels conventional medical approaches as the 'sickness industry'. While he believes that it is reactive, and products and services are provided to people with an existing disease to either treat the symptoms or eliminate the disease. Such view is shared by others (Cohen & Bodecker, 2008). Sacavem and Correia (2009:418) define the wellness market as: ‘‘ consisting of delivering services or selling products in a proactive way to healthy people (without diagnosed pathology) which would encourage the reduction of the aging effect, prevent the occurrence of disease and add to the improvement of one’s self-esteem and body image.’’

Cohen and Bodecker (2008) view the global spa industry as a melting pot for a range of services and products that enhance health and wellbeing. The blending of traditions from around the world has formed a new type of spa including beauty, pampering, service ethics, medical traditions, holistic therapies and spiritual practices. The convergence of these influences has also seen spas become embedded within associated industries including hospitality and tourism (Busheel & Sheldon, 2009; Smith & Kelly, 2006). The concepts of wellness and spa have always existed to some degree. Certain principle components of wellness are intertwined with spa. The spa tourism definition focuses on the relaxation, healing or beautifying of the body in spas using preventative wellness and /or curative medical techniques. Wellness is linked with spa. Therefore, it can say that the wellness and spa industries are inter-related.

Hence, wellness and spa is the place where one can lose weight, enjoy a massage, get a beauty treatment, receive advice for healthy eating, and a healthy lifestyle and different therapies. Additionally, a wellness and spa center gives hope for the majority of people that expect to maintain their overall well-being including a balance between body, mind, and spirit. At present, there are a number of wellness and spa industries offering different products and services. See Appendix 1 and 2 for the different wellness and spa industries.

The wellness and spa industry is a very new and emerging concept in Nepal. However, Basnyat,S .(2009, May 28<sup>th</sup> ) The Medium is The Massage., *Nepal Times* mentioned



that taking purifying baths in sacred springs, healing rituals and massage have long been a part of Nepali culture. Using medicinal herbs and Ayurvedic treatments has been a traditional way of life in the Himalayas for centuries. Such treatments now constitute a multi-billion dollar global industry that is growing. In Asia-Pacific alone there are nearly 22,000 spas employing 363,684 workers with a turnover of \$11.4 billion, according to the Global Spa Summit (2008).

Mathema, P. (2010, November 5<sup>th</sup>) Growing Wellness., *Nepal Times* mentioned that many years before, the wellness and spa facilities were only available in five-star hotels in Nepal. However, as the spa and wellness industry in Nepal is growing, it is no longer necessary to visit a five-star hotel; many independent spas have opened their doors around the city, and at affordable rates. Spa owners admit that their clientele for spas is now an equal mix Nepalese and foreigners. According to Sadhana Tuladhar owner of The Prana Spa (2010), ‘‘ the demand for spas grew in Nepal as people started traveling and experiencing spa treatments abroad’’. She also highlights that ‘‘ Changes in lifestyle have also encouraged people to option for spa services.

The Nepali spa and wellness industry provides a wide range of services from ayurvedic to Thai and Swedish, including Nepali treatments, reflexology, facials, and body treatments. Wellness and Spa have also expanded their services to cater to the beauty needs of their clients by providing manicures, pedicures, and even hairdressing services. Accordingly to the Spa and Wellness Association Nepal (SWAN), there are about 20 spas in operation right now. Most independent spas are day spas and also offer medical consultations. SWAN is working with the Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) and the Hotel Association of Nepal (HAN) to explore the possibility of developing Nepal as a spa destination. ‘The industry is growing, and Nepal has great potential’’ says Hem Nath Regmi, Secretary of SWAN. Mr.Regmi also highlights ‘‘But there is a need for us to develop the infrastructure and regulations to facilitate it.’’

At present, spas are concentrated in Kathmandu but there is room for them to expand into tourism destinations like Pokhara, Sauraha, and trekking areas. There is also a need to develop specialized human power for the industry and guarantee the sourcing of the supplies needed to run a spa. However, the on the other hand, accordingly to Basnyat, S .(2009, May 28<sup>th</sup> ) the term ‘massage’ still has negative connotations in Nepal.

Additionally, Thamel's shady massage parlors have made people wary. However, the spa industry has been trying to overcome that image by lobbying with NTB and other hospitality associations.

## **1.2 The importance of Human Resources in the Wellness and Spa Industry**

Human resources are one of the key resources to any organizational process. In other words, people are a valuable resource for most organizations, but in service based organizations in particular it is often the human resources (i.e. people) that represent the critical factor in delivering successful performance. As per Lynch (2002:71) 'there are some industries where people are not just important, but they are the key factor for successful performance'. While looking at wellness and spa industries, in particular, it is a high-touch industry where people are the product Cohen and Bodeker (2008:378). However, people management, in the context of the wellness and spa industry, is a neglected area and raises a variety of issues to the context and delivery of services in the sector (Baum and Lockstone-Binney, n.d). On the other hand, not much academic research has happened on human resources within the wellness and spa industry. Therefore, the author is relating wellness and spa employees with employees of other similar industries like hospitality and tourism.

Baum (2006) states that, the people who work in wellness tourism play a vital role in the success of the industry and also in delivering the right services. However, their role is largely unrewarded, and undoubtedly under-researched in terms of theoretical analysis and practical management application (Baum, 2006). Furthermore, (Cooper, 1998) says a high quality of the professional human resource in tourism will allow enterprises to gain a competitive edge and deliver added value with their services. Similarly, (Xiong et al., 2013) found in their research that the role of employees is essential in effective brand management for hospitality organizations to create a competitive advantage.

Today, the tourism industry has become one of the major players in international commerce and represents at the same time one of the main income sources for many developing countries (UNWTO, 2015). Additionally, wellness tourism is growing rapidly, and it covers more than \$50 billion global market (Global Spa Summit, 2015). However, (Firoiu, 2003:61) says that the factors that generate the success of the tourism industry, the common idea of all studies and scientific papers are that the worker in the tourism field represents the first and the last impression.

Modern society describes itself as a network of organizations that emerge, develop or disappear. In these circumstances, people are a common resource and at the same time, a key resources, essential for all organization (Cardos & Jaradat, 2011). Additionally, conducting hospitality activity requires, in addition to potential and equipment, the presence of human resources, a factor that ensures the functionality of other components of the supply. Tourism products and services can only be consumed by the intervention of the human factor (Minciu 2001: 199). Therefore, it can be said that without the involvement of human resources, tourism products and services are incomplete. The people are the main asset that makes the hospitality industry unique. According to Overbeck (2012) the profitability of a service and the quality of a service is judged by the staff's performance. This again is judged by the guests and customers that receive the service. Thus, if the employee performs well, the guests are happy and will return or recommend to their friends and family, which will be beneficial for the organizational performance. If the guest, however, was not satisfied then the return business will decrease which will consequently lead to a lower profitability.

The volume and quality of tourism activities are essentially depending on Manning namely on the number of employees and their skill level, the correspondence between the features of employee training and the functions performed by professionalism and promptness in conducting duties.

According to Nickson (2007) human resource in tourism plays an important role in stimulating demand, in creating a relaxed atmosphere, in making the purchasing decision, in creating and maintaining interest and sympathy for a certain tourism product or destination, hotel unit or food establishment, means of transportation or form of recreation, etc., and in determining the return of the tourist.

As service enterprises are intensive businesses, both the effectiveness of HR practices and the job satisfaction of the employee have a vital importance. Among the health institutions that take place in the service industry, one of the largest and the highest variability source are employees Pasaoglu and Tonus (2014). The performance and capacity of the employees are the most important factors that affect the success of the institutions.

As wellness and spa industry is one of the fastest growing sectors in international tourism and requires a different set of human attributes, particularly skills, in order to meet the complex needs of consumers (Baum & Lockstone-Binney, 2012). Additionally, wellness tourism is highly emotional and esthetically demanding work (Hoschschild 1993; Nickson et al., 2003). Therefore, the employee must fully understand the nature of wellness and spa tourism in order to function at the best of his or her ability.

The challenges of the hospitality industry in the new millennium can be summarized as follows: the challenges facing the tourism industry will be met successfully by a well-educated, well-trained, bright, energetic, multilingual, and entrepreneurial workforce who understand the nature of tourism and have professional training. In the past human resources and how they were used were not considered paramount, currently, human capital is placed at the core of all development policies of a company, especially, in tourism. Although many jobs in tourism do not require high-level skills, the development of tourist destinations in high demand involves the existence of a growing number of people with outstanding managerial and technical skills. Westwood (2004) says that employee soft skills would be sufficient in the hospitality industry. Whereas Bolton (2004) strongly argues that high skills are essential in the wellness and spa industry. Bolton (2004) also says that wellness and spa staff needs to look, sound, and behave in a manner that is compatible with the requirements of the job and with the expectations of the customer.

While Bjurstam and Cohen (2008) go a step further in describing spas as ‘spirituality in the workplace’ and, in arguing that those working in the industry require emotional atonement to their work in order to empathise with their clients ‘needs, noting that ‘‘it is difficult for a therapist to give advice, provide empathy, or truly ‘be’ with a client and explore their emotional life unless they have undertaken a similar exploration within

themselves’’Cohen and Russell (2008). Furthermore, Smith and Puzko (2009:180) highlight the sector’s requirement for trained staff stating ‘most of the services and treatments offered in these health institutions require special skills, training and maybe years of experience. They emphasize ‘‘damage’’ can be done to body, mind or spirit through neglectful or uninformed practice (Smith & Puzko 2009:189).

As wellness and spa service are directly related with the human body, the employee working in the wellness and spa sector and especially on occupations like massage therapy needs sound knowledge of the work as well as the nature of the industry. According to Joyher (2015) the following skills are required for wellness and spa employees

- The pleasure of being in contact with people
- The ability to understand all types of people
- Ability to work in teams
- Ability to handle any situation
- Physical stamina
- Good communication skills
- Judgment and perception skills
- Social skills
- Creates a relaxing atmosphere
- Excellent customer service skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Knowledge of proper techniques
- Strong emotional feelings

Hence, based on the general hospitality, wellness and spa industry literature it is clear that human resources are the front page of any industry. Accordingly, the author’s personal work experience in the wellness and spa center, agrees that employees are the essential part of the wellness and spa industry. It is not possible to run a business without them. Not only employees but well qualified and healthy employees are the backbone of any wellness and spa business.

The wellness and spa industry is a dyadic industry where interactions between people happen most of the time. Therefore, all the employees have to be aware of the industry nature. They must have skills, knowledge, and ability to meet the criteria the industry requires. Therefore, all organisations including the wellness and spa industry must understand their employees and motivate or train them in order to superimpose their goals over the objectives of the organisation.

### **1.3 Defining employee well-being and its importance at work**

Wellbeing is a growing area of research, yet the question of how it should be defined remains unanswered (Dodge et al., 2012). Therefore, research in wellbeing has been growing in recent decades (e.g. Ryff, & Singer 2008; Stratham & Chase, 2010; Seligman, 2011). On the other hand, according to Anttonen et al., (2008) well-being at work (WAW) continues to increase in importance for employees and employers and across countries over the past few years. As per them, the workplace is a significant part of an individual's life which is directly and indirectly related to his or her personal well-being and well-being of the community. Hater et al., (2002) mention that the average adult spends much of his or her life working, as much as a quarter or perhaps a third of his waking life in work. As much as a fifth to a quarter of the variation in adult life satisfaction can be accounted for by satisfaction with work (Cambell, Converse, & Roogers 1976; & Haar et al. 2014). Therefore, well-being in the workplace is crucial to maintaining individual well-being, as well as upgrading business standards.

Based on Anttonen et al., (2008) literature the concept of well-being has a long historical development. Well-being results from the fulfillment of the essential needs of individuals and the realization of goals and plans set for one's life. The challenges of well-being at work (W-BW) are connected to continued changes in working life. Well-being at work, as described in the legislation, comprises aspects of occupational safety, occupational health, psycho-social factors (including job stress, mental health, bullying, and sexual harassment), occupational hygiene, workplace design, and the environmental measures taken by companies that affect aspects of well-being. The concept of health

promotion used by WHO, i.e. health promotion is the process of enabling people to increase control over health determinants.

Well-being includes all measures that the employer, employees, and the co-operative organisations at the workplace take in a united effort to promote and support the ability to work and to enhance the functional capacity of all persons active in working life throughout their careers Dodge et al., (2012). While there are different definitions of what the concept entails, within the (European Union, 2013) one useful definition acknowledges that well-being is ‘ a summative concept that characterizes the quality of working lives, including occupational safety and health (OSH) aspects moreover, it may be a major determinant of productivity at the individual, enterprise, and societal levels.’ Furthermore, Van de Voorde (2004) describes occupational well-being as the quality of an employee’s and performance at work. As per his research employee well-being is divided into three categories, especially ‘happiness’, ‘relationship’, and ‘health’. Appendix 3 summarizes all research done within the field of employee well-being and its relation to human resource management.

Wellbeing refers to an individual’s overall assessment of his / her quality of life ((Brinkman, 2002); in the stress literature, work- related stress has been found to be negatively associated with well-being (Fortes-Ferreira et al., 2006 and Schabracq et al., 2003). Hence, reducing the negative effects of job stress has become an important issue. According to Burton and Waddell (2006) well-being is a subjective state of being healthy, happy, contented, comfortable, and satisfied with one’s quality of life. It includes physical, material, social, emotional (‘happiness’), and development, and activity dimensions.

Furthermore, while looking at (Brinkman 2001) work, he discussed two major things. These were job stress and job satisfaction which can be two distinctions of employee well-being at work. In this context, two types of well-being can be classified. Firstly, subjective experiences and performance at work are named. This grouping embraces several aspects like organizational commitment, job satisfaction, benefit, and opportunities to grow. The other category contains occupationally related health, particularly physiological and psychological factors such as job stress.

Grant, Christianson and Price (2007:3) state that social well-being such as the relationship between employer, supervisor, colleagues, and employee should be included in the category of occupational well-being. Subjective experiences, occupational related health, and social well-being are likely to be found in the literature concerning human resource management and organizational climate. Current trends in research and further reading can be found in Appelbaum et al. (2000), Nishii & Wright (2008) and Purcell & Kinnie (2007).

According to Ajala (2013) well-being plays a central role in creating a flourishing working environment. She also mentioned that focusing on well-being at work presents a valuable opportunity and benefits to the organization, societies, and individual growth to feel happy, competent, and satisfied with their roles. The evidence also shows that people who achieve good standards of well-being at work are likely to be more creative, more loyal, more productive, and provide better customer satisfaction than individuals with poor standards of well-being at work (Anttonen et al., 2008). Spector's (1997) review suggested that more satisfied employees are more cooperative, more helpful to their colleagues, more punctual and time-efficient, show up for more days of work, and stay with the company longer than dissatisfied employees, and have impact on customer loyalty. On the other hand, (Sun Jung et al., 2011) argue that the satisfied employees are loyal; they have a good relationship with colleagues and are more happy than dissatisfied. However, employees' satisfaction did not have a significant, direct impact on customer loyalty but showed an indirect influence via customer satisfaction. While looking at the wellness and spa industry, employee job satisfaction in particular massage therapist job satisfaction plays a primary role to provide excellent services. As Braun and Siminson (2008) explain the benefits of massage therapy in the simplest of terms: 'healing input influences healing output'. As we all know that massage is all about touch. As per Vanderbilt, S. (2003) each time we are touched, the emotions related to that contact are stored in our mind and body's tissues. She mentioned that we not only store emotions of pleasure and happiness, but also stress and fear. So, if the therapists are not satisfied with the job, they are more likely to be unhappy with their job that creates bad feelings in them. Also, if we look at Braun and Siminson, massage therapy benefits concept and Vanderbilt, S. healing touch explanation, it can be said that



therapists' overall well-being is most important in providing excellent service to customers.

Studies of what's happening with well-being at work (2007) all business seeks to be in a healthy state. They found that if employees are in a good state of health and well-being, this must surely contribute to successful performance. They comment that healthy and fit employees are essential to ensuring a company remains efficient and profitable. According to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development case studies (as cited in Nickson 2007), those workplaces that recognise the importance of employee well-being, enhance the well-being of their employees, and have high workplace standards are more likely to be productive, successful, creative, and innovative.

While looking at service based industry including the wellness and spa industry it is an extremely stressful industry (Kim et., 2007; Papadopoulou-Bayliss et al., Wildes 2007), as it is labour-intensive and involves frequent rotation, work loaded, intensive contact with customers, and highly emotional labour characteristics (Anderson et al., 2005; Chiang et al., 2010; Hayes & Weathington, 2007; Haynes & Fryer, 1999).

Additionally, the majority of employees in the service based industry are female (Deery and Iverson, 1996) and they are vulnerable and sensitive than male. In the work setting, female tend to have more depression and stress than male counterpart (Nolen-Hoeksema, 1987).

In addition, compared with males, the social role of the female provides support to others and that brings more stress (Kessler et al., 1985). A previous research was done by Michael et al. (2009) indicating that females often experience higher levels of job stress than males in the work setting. As a result, the service based industry must be very careful while handling female employees since they are vulnerable yet they are the pillar of the industry.

Moreover, employee well-being plays a significant role in generating revenue for the company as well. For example, billions of pounds are lost to the UK economy every year through staff sickness (Evans, R, 2013). The CIPD's annual absence management survey (2006) identifies that employee absence is a significant or very significant cost to their organisation: when employees are not happy with what they are doing they are

more likely to be absent from work. Hence, it is imperative to maintain employee well-being at the workplace. Furthermore, Page et al. (2008) proposed that promoting and preserving employee well-being leads to improvement in employee performance, organization growth, and enhancing personal creativity and benefiting the organization.

A recent article in the Harvard Business Review defined 'workplace wellbeing' as an organized, employer-sponsored program that is designed to support employees (and sometimes, their families) as they adopt and sustain behaviours that reduce health risks, improve quality of life, enhance personal effectiveness, and benefits the organisation's bottom lines (Berry et al. 2010).

In summary, work is a pervasive and influential part of an individual's well-being. It affects the quality of an individual's life and his and her mental health, and thereby can influence the productivity of the entire organization. The ability to recognize and promote employee well-being benefits not only the employee but also the organization. In addition, employee well-being is the backbone of the success of any organisation. While talking about the wellness and spa industry, good spa services only are provided by happy and motivated employees. For this reason, wellness and spa managers should attach great importance to motivation and should motivate the employee and increase the job satisfaction of the entire organization.

## **1.4 Meaning of well-being among employees**

Over the late twentieth century, occupational health has developed as a discipline of medicine with the aim of helping in healthcare employees (Studies on what's happening with well-being at work, 2007). They highlight that, occupational health support has tended to be available only in larger organizations where services have been traditionally focused on seeing employees only when sick or for accident preventing at work. According to the CIPD absence management survey (2008) slowly the employee well-being concept is shifting to every business to support the health and well-being among employees rather than managing illness.

There are many varied definitions of well-being. The CIPD believes that well-being at work initiatives need to balance the needs of the employee with those of the organization. According to them, well-being means creating an environment to promote a state of contentment that allows an employee to flourish and achieve their full potential for the benefits of themselves and their organization. They say that, well-being is more than an avoidance of becoming physically sick. It represents a broader bio-psycho-social construct that includes physical, mental, and social health. Bryson et al., (2014) discuss the following characteristics of a job that helps to enhance employee well-being at work.

- ❖ autonomy over how they do their job and a measure of control in relation to the broader organization, e.g. participation in decision-making;
- ❖ variety in their work;
- ❖ clarity over what is expected of them, including feedback on performance, e.g. via appraisals;
- ❖ Opportunities to use and develop their skills, e.g. via the provision of training;
- ❖ Supportive supervision;
- ❖ Positive interpersonal contact; with both managers and co-workers, but also with customers or the general public (wherever required);
- ❖ A perception of fairness in the workplace, both in terms of how the employee is treated themselves but also how their co-workers are treated, with disciplinary and grievance procedures;
- ❖ Higher pay, although this relationship depends not only on the absolute level of pay but how this compares with other workers salary;
- ❖ Physical security, including the safety of work practices, the adequacy of equipment and whether the work environment is pleasant;
- ❖ A sense of job security and clear career prospects;
- ❖ A perception of significance, both in terms of the significance that the job has for the worker, and the perceived value of the job to society

Additionally, Page et al. (2008) discuss the three major aspects that have a significant role in overall well-being of the employee's namely subjective well-being, workplace

well-being, and psychological well-being. Both Bryson (2014) and Page et al. (2008) mention personal growth, social life, and fulfillment, the positive relation with colleagues at work, and self-esteem as primary factors for employee well-being. Whereas, Keyes's (2002, 2005, 2006) mentioned that employee well-being is a holistic approach. Employee well-being requires physical, mental, psychological, and emotional balance. For her, employee well-being is far away from the absence of illness. She indicates the four aspects of employee well-being as:

- 1) Positive affect (feeling cheerful, 'in a good spirit', extremely happy, calm and peaceful, satisfied and full of life)
- 2) Life satisfaction (when combined, positive affect and life satisfaction created the global construct of hedonic )
- 3) Psychological well-being (self-acceptance, positive relations with others, personal growth, purpose in life, environmental mastery and autonomy) and;
- 4) Social well-being (Social-acceptance, social-actualisation, social contribution, social coherence and social integration)

Looking at other perspectives, Waterman (1993) mentions that well-being is all about a happy state of mind, and he described happiness as the positive state of mind that involves the whole life experience. He views well-being as a derivative of personal fulfillment and expressiveness, self-actualisation (Maslow 1968), and self-determination (Ryan and Deci 2001).

In addition while looking at Sarah et al.(2013) generational differences and job satisfaction in leisure services, they found that generation X and generation Y are seeking work-life balance, including putting their family and friends first, and work second Karp et al.'s study (as cited in Ajala 2013), they appreciate direct and immediate feedback along with challenging projects Dunn-Cane et al.'s studies (as cited in Sarah et al. 2013). They like fun at work, face to face and effective communication, social interaction, and meaningful work for themselves and society. Ajala (2013) says that only fulfilling basic needs will not be enough to maintain overall well-being of employees. He highlights that employees need flexibility at work, recognition, promotion, self-actualization, personal growth, and efficient communication.

Hence, employee well-being can be defined in various ways since one human being is completely different from another. However, Bolte Taylor (2008) says that all human beings share the same atoms and molecules. She said that all humans are 99.99 percent identical and, of that tiny 0.1 percent difference, and that is what make us different from each other. Therefore, based on Bolte Taylor finding it can be said that there are many commonalities in human behavior like think, experience emotion, and behave. Additionally, Dr.Dario Maestriperi (prof. of comparative human development, evolutionary biology, and neurobiology at the University of Chicago) says that all human beings share some basic similarities in the way they think, experience emotion and behave. Therefore, based on their concepts and all the research that has been mentioned above, it can be can summarised how employees think about their well-being in general as: well-being for general employees is not merely about managing the physical and cultural environment with the limited aim of not causing harm to the employees. Whereas, the real well-being refers to an individual's overall assessment of his / her quality of life ((Brinkman, 2002), fun at work, challenging work, promotion, appreciation, recognition, effective communication, work- life balance, healthy working environment, freedom to express their feelings.

## **1.5 Factors that influence employee well-being**

Employee well-being and its importance have been defined and explained many times and in many ways in the above pages. Now, the author would like to draw attention to the major factors that impact the employee well-being.

There are many factors that influence employee well-being. Since, well-being is a subjective feeling; it completely depends on the person. Therefore, the factors that affect employee well-being could be different from one person to another. However, while looking at the philosophical concept of Dr.Taylor and Dr. Masestriperi (2013), it can be said that there are many commonalities in human behavior such as think, experience emotion and behave. So based on this theory, and all the research that has been done so far in this field the author would like to highlights some major factors that influence the well-being of the majority of employees.

According to Jamal (1990), job stress is the primary aspect that influences employee well-being. He mentioned that job stress is an individual's reaction to threats that are derived from the characteristics of his or her job, including time stress and anxiety.

K. Mohanty and S. Mohanty (2014) mention that, the hospitality industry, the working environment is characterized by irregular and long working hours, role pressure, and work overload. They state that, when an employee faces such a stressful situation, they quickly become nervous and anxious, which in turn elicits dissatisfaction and negative emotions towards work, eventually reducing well-being. Previous studies have confirmed the negative relationship between work-related stress and employees' well-being or job satisfaction (Fortes- Ferreira et al., 2006; Schabracq et al., 2003; Shani and Pizam, 2009).

On the other hand, Jonge et al. (2000) found that higher job demand (i.e., psychological and physical) and low rewards (i.e. poor salary, job insecurity, and low work support) have a negative impact on overall employee well-being. Based on Karasel and Theorell study (as cited in Jonge et al. 2000) psychological job demands ( e.g. high pressures of time , high working pace, difficult mental work ) has negative impacts on employee well-being if they have low job decision latitude. They described job decision latitude as the worker's ability to control their activities and usage of skills.

Belts et al.'s (2014) research highlights seven major aspects that influence employee job satisfaction, as well as overall well-being. They mentioned that, in order to maintain the overall well-being of the workplace and as well as employee well-being the following points have to be balanced.

- 1) Working condition
- 2) Lower salary
- 3) Promotion
- 4) Work itself
- 5) Interpersonal relationships
- 6) Career opportunities
- 7) Rewards and job security

Various studies have been conducted on the leadership style that affects employee's well-being. According to Nielsen et al., (2008), there is a positive relationship between transformational leadership and its followers' well-being through mediation from work characteristics. Besides that, Bono and Ilies (2006) discovered a relationship between charismatic leadership and positive emotion and mood. Gilbreath et al., (2004) conclude that supervisory behavior was the most dominant factor compared with other workplace factors that influence one's well-being. According to Noblet et al., (2008) employees who have the opportunity to take part in discussions have a better feeling of belongingness and thus lead to better mental health. These studies show that different leadership and management styles influences workers' well-being.

Furthermore, Kakkos and Trivellas's (2011) research found that various manufacturing and service firms encounter problems nowadays, because of the inadequate alignment between a firm's strategies and its human resources thereby resulting in an ineffective response to employee performance. Ooi et al., (2007) found that the strategic management of human resource is considered crucial for the achievement of the various organizational and individual outcomes including job performance. Armstrong (2009: 4) states that "human resource management (HRM) is a strategic, integrated and coherent approach to employment, development and well-being of the people working in organizations." HRM is a crucial part of any company in order to succeed. According to Armstrong (2009:5) it is the HRM's aim to help the company to succeed through its human resource. Therefore, HRM should have the ability to maintain the personnel; to understand their wants and needs to create a work environment that is both fair, in terms of policies, and appealing in terms of staff benefits, rewarding and well-being.

Additionally, Human Resource Management (HRM) consist of principle, practices, and systems that affect the behaviours, attitudes and performances of the employees (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, and Wright 2007). According to Pasaoglu et.al, (2014) HRM practices like training, assessments, career planning, communication, work definition, awarding, preference activities play a vital role in employee well-being.

As most scientists and practitioners suggest, effective and productive HRM practices provide better job satisfaction, and improve overall employee well-being, and eventually, increases performance (Appelbaum, Bailey, Berg and Kalleberg, 2000). Stenjin (2004) found that good HRM practices have a positive effects on employee well-being and in addition to this, the personal characteristics like age, gender, education have important effect on job satisfaction and as well as employee well-being. Furthermore, Brunetto et al., (2014) mentioned that Social Exchange Theory (SET) - as a lens to examine the work place well-being (such as supervisor-subordinate relationship, employee engagement, working condition, communication, and career opportunities) has a huge role on employee well-being and job satisfaction. Saks (2006) conceptualized engagement using SET, which argues that reciprocity in balancing job demands and resources develops in employees who have received adequate support, resources, opportunities for promotion and other socio-emotional resources from their supervisor, leading them to display increased energy and dedication in undertaking work tasks. (Gerstner and Day 1997; Mueller and Lee (2002) argue that supervisors do not manage all employees, in the same way because the quality of 'social exchange' differs depending on the employee involved.

The employees or staffs appear to be liked by their supervisor, irrespective of their performance. Therefore, employee well-being depends on the employee perception of the extent to which the organization he/she works for value the work he/she has done and cared for his/her well-being (Allen, Shore and Griffeth 2003). Employee perception, behaviors and mental state have tremendous influences on his/her well-being.

Brunetto's (2014) states that nurse and police officers are both high emotional labor occupations and these two occupations require a high level of emotional work. Similarly, a wellness and spa occupation also involves a high level of emotional work. Mostly in this type of occupation, employees are expected to regulate their feelings and expressions in accordance with their employers' expectations on a daily basis. Such a role may involve employees having to display behaviors different from those they are feeling, which can be stressful for them (Grandey 2000; Bakker and Heuven 2006). Consequently, such occupations tend to require a commitment to demonstrating



emotions to a client that are appropriate to the job requirements. When they have to fake their emotions often and perform roles in accordance with mandated company rules and expectations, these can negatively impact the overall well-being of the employees (Chan 2011).

Hochschild (1983:7) defined emotional labor as ‘the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display’). It involves managing one’s private feelings while at the same time expressing outward emotions in compliance with organizational norms. This kind of emotional work is common in dyadic interactions context such as spa (massage therapist/client), hospital (Nurse/patient), and school (teachers and students). However, the gap between the emotions that one privately feels and outwardly expressing emotions that are different to such private feelings can create what Hochschild calls ‘emotive dissonance’. The need to play multiple roles and feign emotions to create certain impressions can be psychologically taxing and can negatively affect individuals’ psychological well-being and even lead to burnout.

Sharma and Black’s (2001) interviews with therapists in UK found that the therapists actually derived a lot of satisfaction from their work but were generally frustrated by the lack of respect for their profession and the perception that their work is ‘trivial’. Based on Chan’s (2011) research on ‘the multiple roles of the tuina masseuse in the Shenzhen Spa’, he explained the masseuses work in a thoughtful way. He mentioned that, in the massage center six masseuse photos are shown on a big screen TV, they tend to be younger, and their white clothing is mixed with the bright colored (usually pink) dress. They also have playful and alluring poses and smiles. Cuteness, personality, youthfulness and sexiness are some of the connotations evoked by this photo and hints that the customer is getting more than a simple massage. Such connotations are amplified by a massive display next to the elevators that show life-size cut-outs of the ‘masseuse of the month’ with such designations as ‘Miss July’ and ‘Miss September.’ He mentioned that these kinds of images have a polysemic meaning and that the management is not promoting these masseuses based solely on their ability to provide a good massage, but also their youth and looks.

He encapsulates his work by saying that, this kind of hidden sexual affirmation are very common in wellness and spa centers in particular with the masseuse that can have a negative impact on employee well-being. Guests or clients have directly or indirectly impact on employee well-being. For example, Chan (2012) found in his research that, sometime clients are very rude to the therapist, they talk in a way that makes them feel very low, or sometimes they try to harass them especially while they are performing full body massage. For example, when a therapist asks ‘How does it feel here?’ and ‘This place is quite sore. I’m going to press a little harder. Tell me if you feel any pain. Then guests said: I am paying you to treat my body. Not to answer your question.

The customer ended up paying no tip at all at the end of the treatment, which is considered a very ungracious act since tipping is expected. These kind of awful situations are often happening in wellness and spa industries, and that has an enormous impact on employee psychological well-being. Additionally, Jo (2013) found that women’s bodies are highlighted to promote the wellness and spa industry in such a way that it creates women’s corporeal anxiety. Ultimately it can also affect the psychological well-being of female therapist.

The studies presented here gave a brief overview of the wellness and spa industry and the importance of human resources within the wellness and spa industry. This includes a general definition of employee well-being at work, the meaning of well-being among employees and the major factors that influence employee well-being and how it can affect services. Although the theoretical parts can be used to draw some conclusions, the main purpose of this Masters thesis is to find the major factors that influence employee well-being and how it affects the services in the context of the Nepali wellness and spa industry. Few or no papers were found that directly addressed employee well-being in the context of Nepal. As Nepal and other countries are different in various ways such as culture, beliefs, and norms and so on, these things have a huge influence on peoples’ perceptions, behaviours, and lifestyle. Hence, there is a gap in literature, so it was useful to conduct this empirical research.

## **2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 Research methods**

It is obviously challenging to undertake research on understanding human behaviour because people are different from each other. On top of that, people often behave differently in different circumstances. Human behaviours are unpredictable, they frequently change their mood based on the situation and circumstances. However, at the same time it is fascinating and very interesting to know different opinions from different people who work in the same field. So knowing different opinions from different people allows seeing the same thing from different perspectives. It also helps to understand people from different angles and give ideas to formulate a new way to manage them effectively by involving them.

There are various methodologies to conduct research on human behaviour. According to Wahyuni (2012) a methodology, refers to a model to conduct research within the context of a particular paradigm. She mentioned that it comprises the underlying set of beliefs that guide a researcher to choose one set of research methods over another. While keeping in mind the nature of the research question, the author decided to use an interpretivism research paradigm (or theory) to guide the thesis in a good direction. Peoples' perceptions and beliefs are a major aspect of this thesis that plays a significant role in final outcomes. Therefore, the author used interpretivism beliefs as a foundation in order to avoid bias and give ultimate results.

Interpretivists consider that reality is constructed by social actors and peoples' perceptions of it. Wahyuni (2012) said that Interpretivists recognise that individuals with their varied backgrounds, assumptions and experiences contribute to the on-going construction of reality existing in their broader social context through social interaction. Because these human perspectives and experiences are subjective, social reality may change and can have multiple perspectives (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011). Therefore; Interpretivists reject Objectivism and a single truth as proposed in post-positivism. Likewise, in this paper the author is trying to understand employee well-being from the employee perspective. As mentioned above people have different perceptions, and these

perceptions are subjective. Their perceptions and beliefs shape reality. Therefore, it is essential to understand human perceptions from different perspectives to recognise the dynamic. There are no absolute right and wrong perceptions, and there are no solid truths. It is all about deeply understanding the different human perceptions and creates a system that favours large numbers of people.

According to Wahyuni (2012) to understand the social world from the experiences and subjective meanings that people attach to it, Interpretivistic's researchers favour interacting and having a dialogue with the studied participants. Similarly, this thesis research also used face to face interviews, Skype interviews, questionnaires, and dialogues with therapists, and also mentioned author work experience to provide a rich description of subjects which are explained in further chapters.

In the following chapters Firstly, research methods and data collection method including a sample of the survey research are explained. Secondly, the analysis of the research is outlined and compared against the research objectives and theoretical reviews, as well as presenting the major findings.

While considering the aim of this thesis-which is to find out the major factors that influence the employee well-being and ultimately how it affect the services in the context of Nepali wellness and spa industry. A mixed research method was conducted by using questionnaires (survey) and semi- structured interviews. The author believes that in order to meet the research question requirement it is necessary to know the different perspectives from employee, employer and guests; because they are dependent variables. They also have a huge impact on each other. Therefore, the author involved three groups in order to give logical and relevant outcomes.

The appropriate and separate closed-ended and open –ended questionnaires prepared for the Spa therapist and Spa guest. Semi-structured interview conducted with the spa managers in order to get in-depth knowledge of the places. Besides that, informal interviews conducted with Nepali therapists in Nepali languages via Skype

Hence, this study consists of two phases conducted sequentially: phase one, a quantitative self-administered questionnaire survey, which provided overall guests and therapists' opinion. This was followed by phase two qualitative semi-structured and

informal interviews with the managers and employees respectively, which enabled in-depth investigation of the situations.

As mentioned above a mixed method was used in this paper. Mixed methods research (the combined use of quantitative and qualitative methods in the same study) is becoming an increasingly popular approach in the fields of sociology, psychology, education and health science (Cameron et al., 2010). Calls for the integration of quantitative and qualitative research methods have been advanced in these fields (O’Cathain, 2009; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). In addition, mixed methods research has received much attention in social and behavioral science recently (for a review, see Tashakkori and Creswell 2008). The overall purpose and central premise of mixed methods is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination may provide a better understanding of research problems and complex phenomena than either approach alone (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007).

Several definitions exist for mixed methods research. Greene, Caracelli and Graham (1989) defined mixed methods research designs like those that include at least one quantitative method (designed to collect numbers) and one qualitative method (designed to collect words). Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) refer to mixed methods studies as those that combine the qualitative and quantitative approaches into the research methodology of a single study. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) indicated that mixed methods research is the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study. While Plano Clark and Creswell (2008) explained mixed method research as a research that combines qualitative and quantitative data collection and data analysis within a single study. The beauty of using a mixed method is that it helps to combine quantitative and qualitative research methods in the same research inquiry, which provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone. Additionally, mixed methods research also helps to develop rich insights into various phenomena of interest that cannot be fully understood using only a qualitative or quantitative method (sweetman et al., 2013).

The main reason the author decided to use mixed methods is listed below

- 1) The nature of the research question required both qualitative and quantitative data, where quantitative research helps to answer 'what' questions and qualitative research helps to answer 'How' questions.
- 2) Qualitative data allows researchers to gather an in-depth understanding of human behaviour and the reasons that govern such behaviour. It also offers enormous potential for generating new ways of understanding the complexities and contexts of social experience, and for enhancing author capacities for social explanation and generalization.(Mason, 2006:10)
- 3) Whereas quantitative research enables authors to know peoples' opinions in a structured ways and gives precise information in large quantities within a short period.

There are many weaknesses of using Mixed Methods as well, according to Onwuegbuzie and Jonson (2004)

- a) Time consuming
- b) Difficult finding a researcher with experience in both qualitative and quantitative research.
- c) The researcher has to learn multiple methods and be able to know how to mix each method effectively.
- d) Qualitative data losses its flexibility and depth, which is one of the main advantages of qualitative research. (Bazeley, 2004)

Hence, proponents of mixed methods research appreciate the value of both qualitative and quantitative worldviews to develop a deep understanding of a phenomenon of interest. For example, this research used interviews (a qualitative data collection approach) and surveys (a quantitative data collection approach) to collect data about the employee well-being in wellness and spa industry in the context of Nepal. Moreover, there are several scholars who have used mixed method in health, education, and employee well-being research for example Sandelowski (2000) Nursing, Creswell, Palnon Clark, Gutmann and Hanson (2003) Educational research, Creswell, Fetter and Ivankova (2002) Primary Medical Care, Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003b) social and behavioural research, Greene (2007) Evaluation, and Edmunds (2011) employee well-being in small and medium enterprises, Hua Hung (2015) employee sense of well-being as a mediating effect, and Dell et al (2015) workers' perceptions on working

environment. These examples show the great benefits of using mixed method research in health and employee well-being. Therefore, the author of this paper believes that mixed methods enable in-depth understanding of the research question

## **2.2 Data Collection and Sample**

Questionnaires and semi -structure interviews were chosen as data collection methods for this Master's Thesis. The research was conducted from 23<sup>rd</sup> of Feb 2015 to 4<sup>th</sup> of April 2015. At the beginning of the research process, all the questionnaires were in English. After the first pilot study, the author realised that the majority of Nepali therapists did not understand the English questionnaires correctly. Additionally, it was hard for them to express their feelings in English. Therefore, after 1<sup>st</sup> May 2015 the therapist questionnaire was translated into Nepali languages with the help of English to Nepali translator and distributed again.

There was a total of 9 questions in the therapist questionnaire that had to be answered by respondents. The therapist questionnaire was divided into three sections. In the first section question, 1 (a) and (b) the author was trying to understand their physical workload. In the second section question 2 (c), (d), (e), and (f) were to identify respondent emotional feelings towards their job status including their family and society perspective. Moreover, lastly, in question (3) the researcher wanted to find out to what extent all those aspects play a role in influencing their well-being

Question 1 contained two questions with options. Question 2 contained four questions, where one was closed-ended, and the other three were open-ended in order to give room for the therapists to express their actual feelings. Moreover, question 3 contained 14 different well-being factors with endpoints of "totally agree" and "totally disagree". In this way, respondents were asked to indicate their degree of agreement by checking one of the five responses categories

Likert scale response categories where the respondent can only check one of the five responses (strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree) as to indicate the degree of agreement to a given statement was used from question 3.

The therapist questions were designed in a way that closely covered Nepali lifestyle, society, working environment, and overall circumstance. For the clarification on the questions used in the questionnaires see Appendix (4).

While keeping in mind that guests visit wellness and spa centers for relaxation and relief, escape, self-reward and indulgence, and health and beauty (Mak.et al 2009). Therefore, only eight but very specific close-ended questionnaires were distributed to the spa guests in order to get as much precise information as possible. The first question was about the frequency of guest spa visit. The next four questions were designed to identify guest overall satisfaction level. Moreover, the last three questions were about guest opinion of employee attitudes, and behaviours towards them.

The closed-ended question included multiple choice and an itemized scale with majority endpoints are ‘‘strongly disagree’’ and ‘‘strongly agree’’. In this way, respondents were asked to indicate their degree of agreement by checking one of the five response categories. Guests’ questionnaires sent to the spa receptionist by reception email address, and the receptionist gave the questions to the guest. The author gave almost a one- month period to fill the guest questionnaires to each wellness and spa center. After one- month the author received all the data by email. For the clarification on the questions used in the questionnaires see Appendix (5).

A questionnaire enabling quantitative data is collected in a standardized way so that the data are internally consistent and coherent for analysis. It also ensures comparability of the data across respondents, increases speed and accuracy of recording, and facilitates data processing. On the contrary, questionnaire items may not have the same meaning to all respondents, and the format of design makes it difficult for the researcher complex issues and opinions. Even where open-ended questions are used, the depth of answers that the respondent can provide tend to be more-limited than with almost any other method of research. This makes it difficult for a researcher to gather information that is rich in depth and details (Malhotra, 2004). Additionally, respondents can misinterpret



the questionnaires, for example, when asked ‘*how do you view your profession?*’ most of the employs answered ‘*at school*’ however, when author explained to them what the question was asking then they gave different answers.

Open-ended and close-ended questions differ in several characteristics, especially as regards the role of respondents when answering such questions. Close-ended questions limit the respondent to the set of alternatives being offered while open-ended questions allow the respondent to express an opinion without being influenced by the researcher (Foddy, 1993). This has several consequences for the quality of survey data. The advantages of the open-ended questions include the possibility of discovering the responses that individuals give spontaneously and thus avoiding the bias that may occur in the case of close-ended questions. However, open-ended questions also have disadvantages in comparison to close-ended, such as the need for extensive coding and larger item non-response. In addition, as documented many decades ago by Lazarsfeld (1944), in questionnaire design; open-ended questions can be used to explore deviant responses to close-ended questions.

In order to collect qualitative data, semi-structured Skype interviews were conducted with 10 Nepali spa managers in the Nepali language. Due to the inconvenient internet connection and large load shedding problems in Nepal it was hard to conduct Skype interviews with ten Spa Managers. Interviews were repeatedly interfered with by poor internet collection, and the author had to wait for approximately 1 to 2 days to resume the interview. Nevertheless, the author was able to conduct all of the interviews within two weeks. Additionally, eight spa therapists gave the Skype interview for this research. Furthermore, one intense informal talk was conducted with one Nepali spa therapist who visited Estonia (temporary resident) for three months as a spa consultant for one massage center in Pärnu. The author spent the entire day with her to get in-depth information. All the questions were used in the interview and the informal talk was directly and indirectly related to the aim of this thesis. Interviews were taped, and then transcribed into English for the purpose of this report. Since the author of this thesis is fluent in both languages, it was not difficult for her to translate Nepali to English. However, for the accuracy check, the author took help from a professional English to Nepali translator from Nepal. A copy of interview questions of the manger is provided

in Appendix (6) of this report. Besides that, the majority are highlighted in the data analysis part.

A semi-structured interview, also known as the non-standardised or qualitative interview (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2009), is a hybrid type of interview which lies in-between structured interviews and in-depth interviews. Therefore, Wahyuni (2012) says it offers the merit of using a list of predetermined themes and questions as in a structured interview, while keeping enough flexibility to enable the interviewee to talk freely about any topic raised during the interview. Hence, semi-structured interviews with both employees and managers enabled the author to understand the issues in-depth.

All the necessary interview etiquette was followed carefully, for example, as suggested by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009); the interview should be formed by briefing before the interview commenced, and debriefing afterward. The author sent the research information by email beforehand in an email. The interview started by briefly explaining the aim of the interview and emphasizing the confidentiality, anonymity and the voluntary nature of the study. The entire interview was recorded with the participant's permission.

The sample is a "smaller" (but hopefully representative) collection of units from a population used to determine truths about that population (Field, 2005). They are various types of samples, but convenience samples were used in this research. According to Explorable.Com (Sep 16, 2009) convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where subjects are selected because of their convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher. Based on Explorable.com, in all form of research, it would be ideal to test the entire population, but in most cases, the population is just too large it is impossible to include every individual. Additionally, in many cases it is almost impossible to reach all the population due to many reasons like language, distance, time, and money. Therefore, most researchers rely on sampling techniques like convenience sampling, which is the most common of all sampling techniques. Many researchers prefer this sampling technique because it is fast, inexpensive, easy, and the subjects are readily available. As per Trochim (2008) it is also important to keep in mind that with non-probability samples, we may or may not represent the population.

Thamel area from Kathmandu city was chosen as the research area from Nepal. According to Spa and Association Nepal, there are approximately 20 wellness and spa centers in Thamel which consist of small massage center as well. Out of these five biggest wellness and spa centres have been chosen as a sample that covered 25% of the total population. These three wellness and spa center are similar types of organization that facilitate all types of wellness and spa services. .

Altogether 100 therapists filled the questionnaires from three wellness and spa hotels; which consisted of 20 from 1<sup>st</sup> spa, 19 from 2<sup>nd</sup>, 16 from 3<sup>rd</sup> spa, 18 from 4<sup>th</sup> spa, and 15 from 5<sup>th</sup> spa. Additionally, in order to add more data the author included 12 Nepali respondents who work in wellness and spa centers in the international arena. Out of 12 respondents, the author met with one respondent in Pärnu whereas 11 respondents were contacted via electronic media like Viber, Skype, and Facebook. Additionally, ten spa managers gave the interviews. Furthermore, altogether 150 guests who visited those three wellness and spa centers filled the questionnaires.

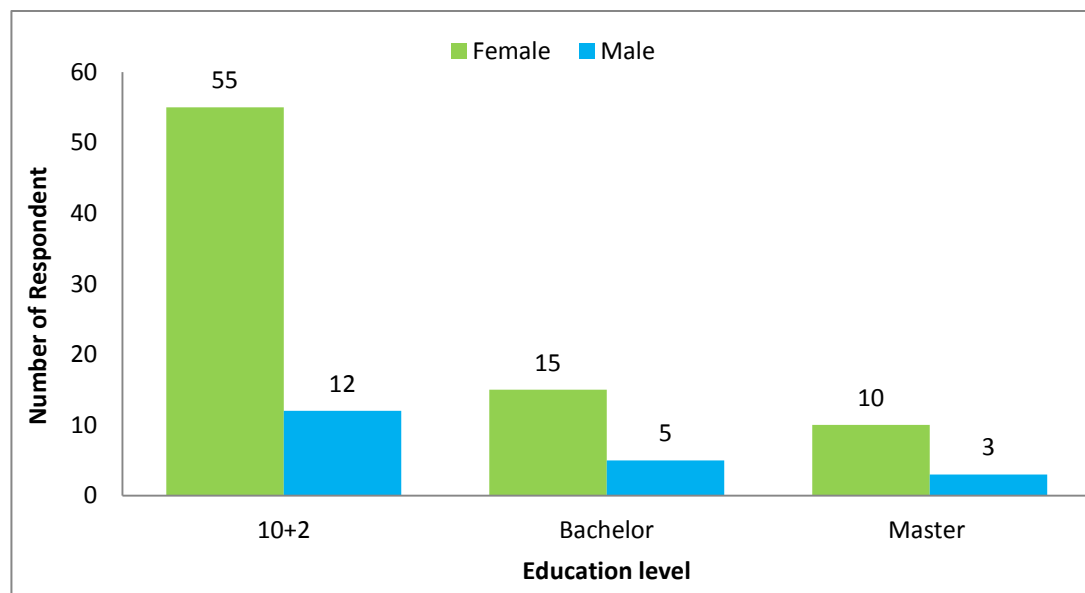
The result would have been more interesting and reliable if the author could have covered all spas from Thamel. However, due to many factors it was not possible for the author to cover the whole population. Nevertheless, the author believes that the above sample is fairly representative of the whole population of both cities.

## **2.3 Data analysis**

Out of a total of 100 employee respondents, the minority respondents were male, and majority respondents were female with 20% and 80% respectively. The obvious reason for female respondents out-numbering their male counterpart is because there are more female employees in the chosen wellness and spa centers.

The number of respondents between the age categories of 19-24 is way more than any other age groups in the sample. The second highest age groups are 25-30, followed by 32-35 and 36-41. The different age categories will not be discussed further because the answers from the different age groups of male and female respondents were closely

similar. However, the distinct opinions are shown where there are some. The education level of the employees is shown in the bar below.



**Figure 1.** Education level of the respondent by gender (n=100).

It can be clearly seen in the above table that a large number of female and male respondents has 10+2 (high school) education level which is 69% and 60% respectively. On the other hand, slightly more female and male respondents have a Bachelor degree that is 19% and 25% respectively. In contrast, a small number of females and males have a Master degree education that is 12% and 15% respectively. While talking about respondents' work experience, the majority of respondents have 1-2 years and 3-4 years of work experience which is followed by 5-6 and 7-8 years. The least number of respondents has more than nine years of work experience.

As Nepal is, a very diverse country and people from rural areas and city areas are completely different from each other. Their circumstances have an enormous influence on how they think, how they behave, and their entire lifestyle. Therefore, the author asked the employees to mention their permanent address. As a result, significant numbers of the employee are from out of Kathmandu valley and the rural area of Nepal, and insignificant numbers of employees are from cities including valleys.

The question 1(a) and (b) was concerned with employee physical well-being. Based on respondents' answers, almost all employees work 54 hours a week. However, during the

high season, on the request of managers employees work 66-72 hours per week. There are no huge working hour's differences between female and male counterpart. While talking about the respondents who work in international areas, they work 40 hours per week and only in high season they work 45-50 hours but at the end of the year either they get holiday or are paid.

While talking about question 1(b) which is concerned with how many treatments employees usually perform in a given day, the majority of employees provide 5-6 treatments per day. They also mentioned that during peak season they give up to 9-12 treatments per day. Sometimes when it is very busy, they are obliged to give more than 13 treatments per day. There is a slight difference in the number of treatments provided by male and female therapists. Mainly men visit the wellness and spa centers, and they mostly choose female therapists. Therefore, female therapists give more treatments than male therapists. However, male therapists are busy with other kinds of work when they are not giving treatments like-cleaning, marketing, laundry, and others spa related works. In contrast, respondents from outside Nepal say: in a given day usually they provide 1-4 treatments. However, in high season they give up to 10 treatments.

In relation to employee well-being, long duty hours, and work under high pressure is not good for employee overall well-being. In this expensive world, these two factors become major well-being challenges for the majority of spa employees.

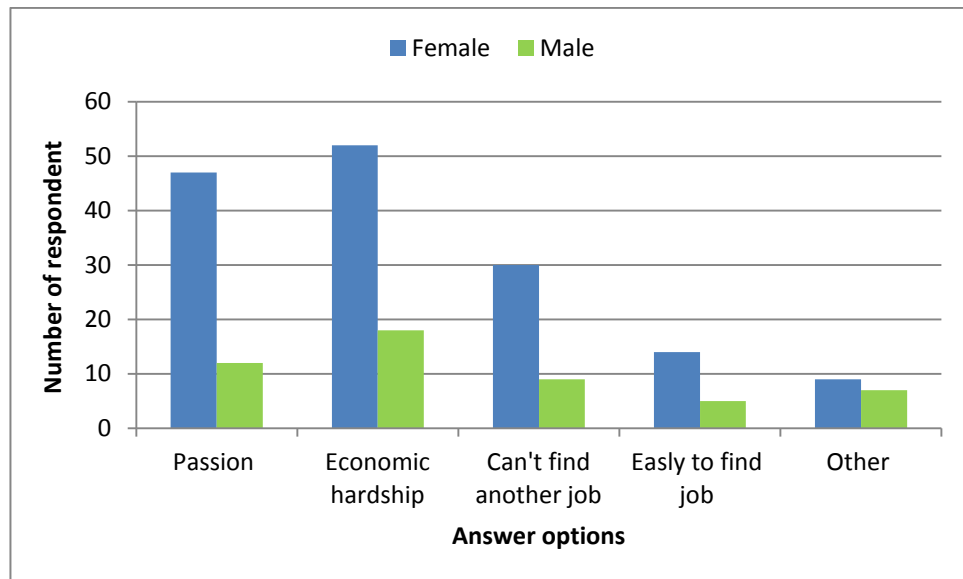
The second part of the questions is related to employee feeling towards their job status including their family and society perspective. It is important to mention their family and society opinion because it has huge influences on peoples' working life in Nepal. There are three questions in this part where one is closed- ended and two are open-ended. Concerning the question, the reason work as a spa therapist; the reasons to work as a therapist do vary for different people as responses to this question during the survey proved. Also, an individual have has more than one reason to work as a spa therapist. Below is a table indicating answer choices and responses generated by each choice to the question discussed below.

**Table 1.** The reason employees are working in Wellness and Spa Industry

<b>Answer Choices</b>	<b>Responses (Times)</b>
<b>Passionate about this profession</b>	59
<b>Obligation (due to economic hardship)</b>	70
<b>Cannot find other jobs</b>	39
<b>Easy to get job in wellness and spa</b>	19
<b>Other reason</b>	16

As indicated in the above table, the main reason to work in wellness and spa industry in Nepal is due to economic hardship. The second reason is they are passionate about their profession followed by ‘‘cannot find other jobs in Nepal ‘‘ while ‘‘easy to get a job in wellness and spa’’ generated a few responses.

Respondents specified other answer choices which were slightly different than the options given, such as: they want to understand this industry closely and they would like to become a specialist and offer excellent holistic wellness services in Nepal. They also mentioned that being a therapist means they understand themselves in a better way. Additionally, they said ‘‘ this industry provides an opportunity to meet with a variety of people that may help them to go aboard for better jobs’’. The bar chart below shows the male and female responses for each choice answer to the statement ‘‘you are working as a therapist because.”



**Figure2.** The reason employees are working as a spa therapist according to responses by gender (n=100).

The female responses are significantly higher than male responses. Therefore, there is a huge difference in female and male answers. The main reason to work as a spa therapist does not vary between males and females in terms of preference to answer options. For both female and male ‘economic hardship’ is the major reason to work as a spa therapist (34% and 35% respectively). While a number of respondents choose ‘passion’, this is significantly higher in the male response choice. However, both genders tally with ‘can’t find another job’ and ‘easy to find a job.’

Additionally while talking about the respondents who work outside the country, work passion is the priority to work in this field and secondly to earn good money and to have similar types of business in Nepal. 12 respondents have the same opinions.

Concerning the respondents’ view towards their profession, the largest numbers of respondents (from the rural part of Nepal) are not very happy with what they are doing. A number of therapists mentioned that it is a high demand industry where they can earn good money. Therefore, in order to survive their life in Kathmandu Valley and their family life in the village they are obliged to do this job; since there are not more job opportunities in Kathmandu valley.

Additionally they mentioned that they feel good because they help people to reduce their pain, make them feel relaxed and happy. However, on the other hand, they are making their health worse. For example - many respondents said that ‘*I felt totally exhausted after work every day. My fingers, my hands, and my back are so sore after serving about ten clients each day*’. They also mentioned that they have to buy much pain killers and medical balms to soothe their sore and painful hands. Therefore, it is almost impossible to give excellent services on a daily basis.

Additionally, they mentioned that clients share their problems with them especially when they are providing full body massage. For example, one therapist says ‘it is good to listen to their thoughts, but the thoughts can be positive or negative. moreover, most of the time they used them as an outlet to express their frustrations, and problems; and if their frustration is relevant to a therapist’s life story, it makes them feel worse for longer period of time’. Therefore, the majority of respondents do not like their profession because of this fact. Despite the fact that, mostly those who come from Kathmandu valley and city center they enjoy their jobs because they got a chance to meet with international people and earn good money (including tips). Additionally, they also mentioned that through this job there is a high possibility to get jobs in the international arena.

However, interestingly, few respondents (who work in the international arena) are positive about their profession. They said that they viewed their job as a good platform from where they can help people, make the people feel good and satisfied. They also mention that, this a high demand industry where they can boost their creativity and innovation. Additionally, they said that it is a lucrative industry, and if they perform well they have the great possibility to earn money and rapid career development. They highlight that it is obviously not an easy job to work on the human body, and make them feel happy by different hand movements and pressure. However, if they are qualified and have a profound knowledge of what they are doing than it is not as hard.

In respect to their parent’s opinion towards their job, the majority of parents hold two different opinions sometimes (i.e. they are fine and they not fine as well) especially with female respondents. Most of the respondents from rural areas mentioned that their parents are not happy with what they are doing. However, they ask them to work there



because of economic hardship. A number of the respondents mention that ‘‘when they share their work situation, and all the problems they have been facing there, their parents usually try to ignore it, and just talk about how much they earn and how much they can send to them’’.

However, a few respondents mentioned that their family members do not have any problems with their job; instead they encourage them to develop their knowledge and skills. In contrast, they also mentioned that, even though, their family does not have problems with their job title, but still they have a hard time to convince their grandparents. Therefore, they mention that they cannot give their 100% because they are often emotionally hurt.

With those who work in an international arena, their parents always support and encourage them in each and every step of their life. Moreover, due to this fact they can work in an international environment. They emphasize that without their parent’s support they would not be able to work internationally and especially in this field.

Men responded that their parents do not have any problems with their jobs as long as they give good money to their parents. However, they point out that their parents seldom mention that ‘‘it would be good if you could find a better job or go abroad like India, Malaysia, Dubai, and some other countries to earn good money.’’

Nepal is a collectivist country; therefore, Nepali lifestyle is very closely related to their society and their community. Society has huge influences on the majority of Nepali peoples’ lifestyle. Concerning the question how does your society view your profession’’, according to the responses, the wellness and spa industry concept is not very common in Nepali society. Significant numbers of Nepali people consider wellness and spa industry as an unclean work place where people provide more than massage. Larger numbers of respondents mention that many years before, in order to earn money people used to operate brothels through massage centers and Nepali prostitutes prefer to work in massage centers than on streets as they can be safe from the police since prostitution is illegal in Nepal.

Now, the situation is much better than before. However, old people still hold this unhealthy concept and view wellness and spa industry as an unclean work place.

Because of this fact a number of the respondent do not like to share their profession openly in their community. Mostly they say that they work in hotel reception or something like that. One of the respondents said ‘ ‘ actually, *my society does not know what exactly my profession is, and I do not like to share with them either. However, one of my neighbors came to our spa to have a massage, and he saw me there. He was so shocked to see me there and after that, he spread this news to our area. After that, all my neighbors start to talk with my parents about my job. Most of them were saying that why you allow your girl to work in massage center, be careful ‘ ‘ it will be hard for her to get married’’ or’’ no one will marry her’’*. Therefore, sometimes it is so painful work with this kind of society concepts. However, I am trying to avoid as much as I could.’

In contrast, few respondents who are from city areas and who work in aboard said that their society does not care about their job because they do not know what they are doing. However, they also mention that Nepali society is not developed enough to take this industry as a good working place with a socially acceptable situation. Therefore, they would like to take an initiative to educate people and change this concept gradually.

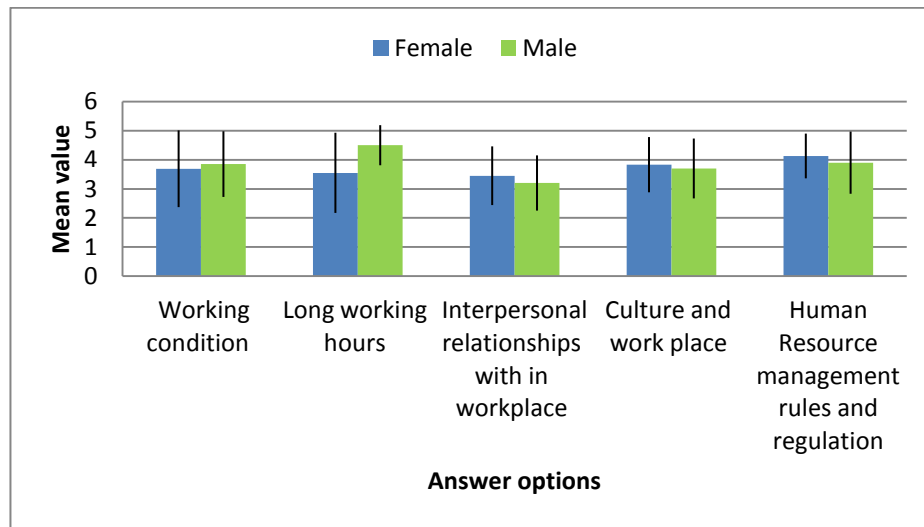
In respect to male counterparts, a significant majority of respondents said their society would be more valued if they could have worked in other professions like doctor, engineer, teachers and some other respectable jobs in Nepal. One of the male respondents mentioned ‘ ‘ *when I talked to my friends about my profession they made jokes out of my profession and laugh at me; which made me feel awful sometimes’’*.

Hence, in general, the male situation is far better than the female situation. In relation to employee well-being, obligatory work, or undesired work has negative influences on employee well-being. Despite the fact that it fulfills short term necessity but in long terms it has a negative impact on employee well-being.

This part of the survey is based on Likert scale questions that are divided into two parts. The first of the questions is trying to understand the major factors that influence the male and female therapists’ wellbeing; which is divided into four sub-groups. The first group related to ‘to what extent ‘work place’ influences the respondents well-being’, followed by the 2nd group related to ‘finance’, the 3<sup>rd</sup> group related to society and 4<sup>th</sup>

group related with personal issues. Whereas the second part of the questions are focused on how ill-being of the employees affects their performance.

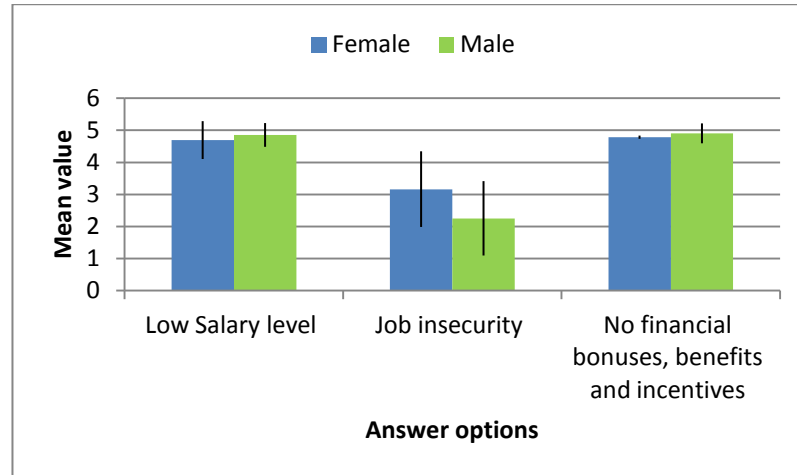
In part one, five options are given and respondents were asked to indicate their degree of agreement and disagreement (where 1 indicates totally disagree and 5 indicates totally agree) by checking one of the five response categories. In order to analyze the received data mean and standard deviation were calculated. The results of the survey are presented in Figure 3 below.



**Figure 3.** Mean and standard deviation calculation of response choice by gender (n=100).

Based on the above figure it can be clearly seen that the significant factors that influence female respondents well-being are ‘human resource management rules and regulation (4.13)’, culture and work place(3.83), which is followed by working condition (3.69), long working hours (3.55) and interpersonal relationship within work environment (3.45). On the other hand, the significant influencing well-being factors for male respondents are ‘long working hours (4.5), human resource management rules and regulation (3.90) followed by work condition (3.85), culture and work place (3.70), and interpersonal relationships within workplace (3.20). There are substantial differences between female and male opinions because the variation of the standard deviation is high with each other’s except ‘working condition’.

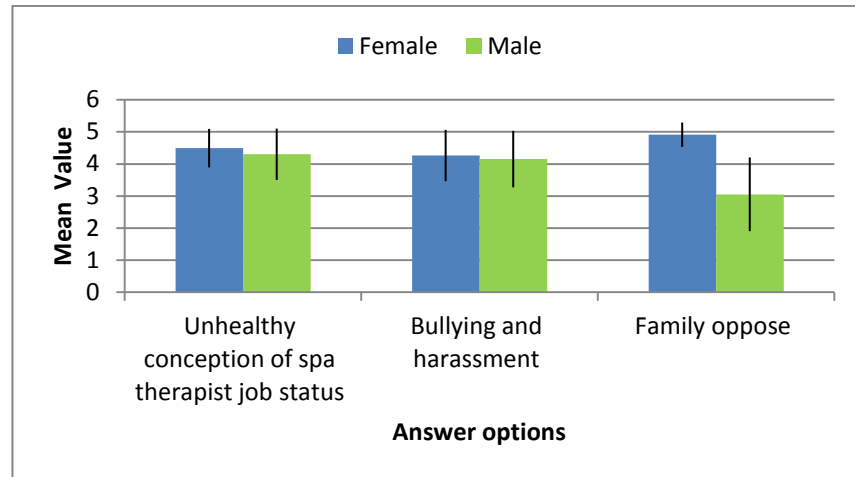
In the second group, three options are given, and respondents were asked to indicate their degree of agreement and disagreement (where 1 indicates totally disagree and 5 indicates totally agree). The results are presented in Figure 4 below:



**Figure 4.** Mean and standard deviation calculation of responses choice by gender (n=100)

Based on the above result, ‘‘No financial bonuses, benefits, and incentives’’ play a significant role to influence employee well-being for both genders (mean 4.78 female; 4.90 male). Which is followed by ‘‘low salary level’’ (mean 4.69 female; 4.85 male) and ‘‘job insecurity’’. There are no considerable differences between female and male opinion except ‘‘job insecurity’’ which more influences female respondents’ well-being compared to male counterparts where the mean value of female and male respondents are 3.16 and 2.25 respectively.

In the third group, three options are given, and respondents were asked to indicate their degree of agreement and disagreement (where 1 indicates totally disagree and 5 indicates totally agree). The results are presented in the Figure below:

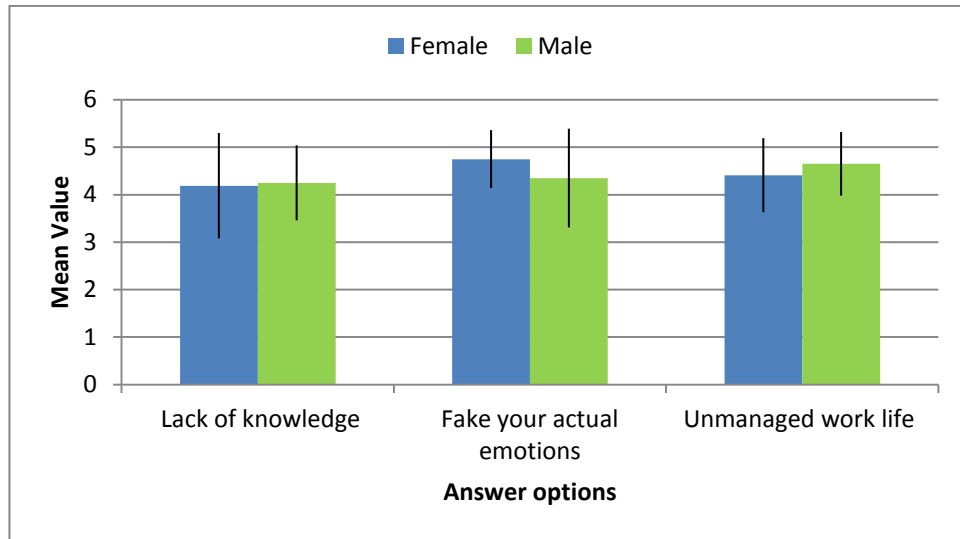


**Figure 5.** Mean and standard deviation calculation of response choice by gender (n=100)

Based on above the chart ‘‘unhealthy conception of spa therapist job status’’ has a significant influence on both gender well-being - the mean value of female and male respondents are 4.19 and 4.25 respectively. ‘‘Bullying and harassment’’ also play a substantial role in influencing both genders’ well-being, whereas, ‘‘family oppose’’ also plays a significant role in influencing respondents’ well-being. However, ‘‘family oppose’’ plays a more influential role in female well-being as compared to male counterparts.

Both gender opinions are slightly similar to each other’s because there is a low variation of standard deviation value except ‘‘family oppose’’ where the female standard deviation is higher than the male that is 0.78 and 0.76 respectively.

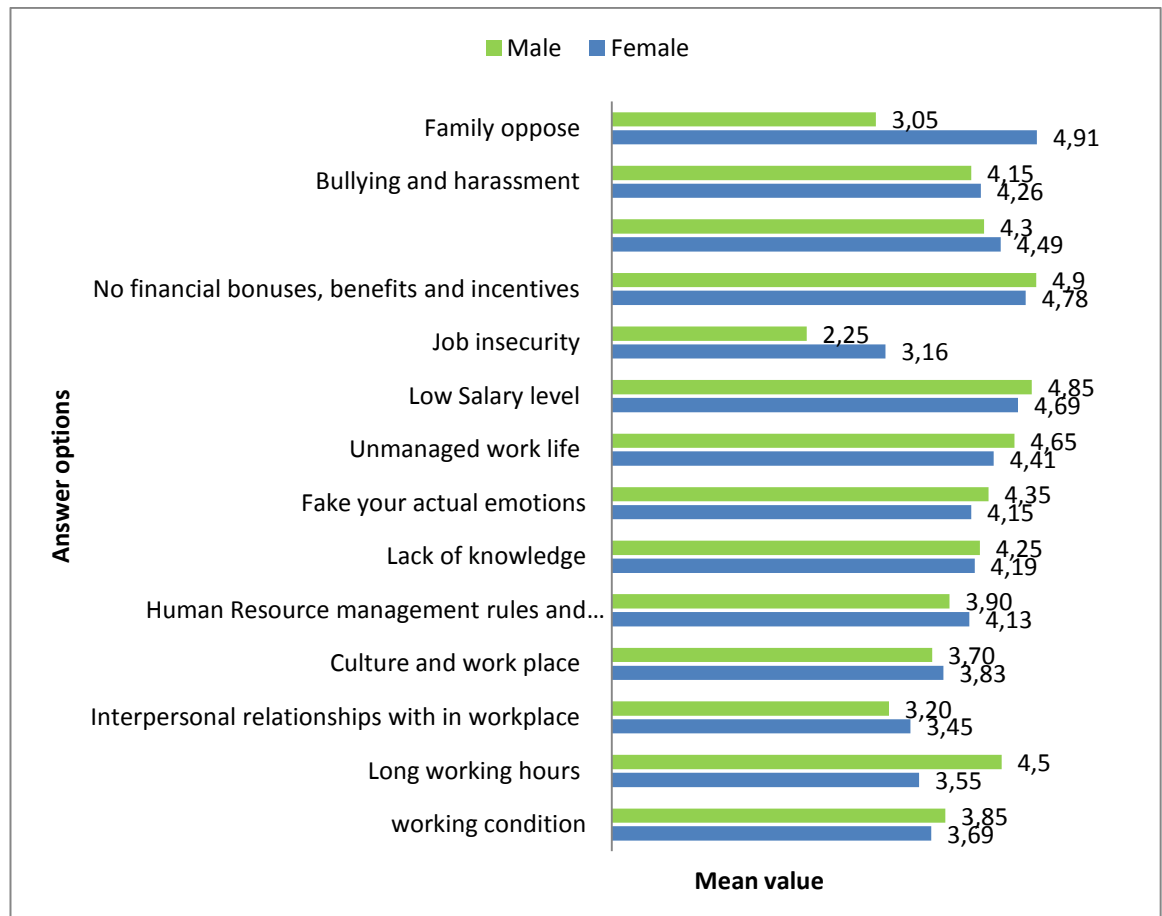
In the last part, three options are given, and respondents were asked to indicate their degree of agreement and disagreement (where 1 indicates totally disagree and 5 indicates totally agree). The results are presented in the Figure below:



**Figure 6.** - Mean and standard deviation calculation respondents' choice by gender (n=100)

Based on the survey result ‘‘ fake your actual emotions and perform roles in accordance with mandated company rules and regulation’’ play a significant role in female and male respondents' well-being - the mean value is 4.75 and 4.35 respectively. Followed by ‘‘unmanaged work life’’ and ‘‘lack of knowledge’’.

In order to give a whole picture of the analysis of this part, all four analyzes are summarized in the bar chart below.



**Figure 7.** The summary of all four aspects that influence employee well-being by gender (n=100)

Hence, based on the above bar chart the most significant factors that influence the female respondents' well-being is 'family oppose' for which the mean value is 4.91. In contrast, it does not play such a considerable influence on male well-being for which the mean value is 3.05. Whereas 'low salary level' plays a considerable role in influencing male respondents' well-being for which the mean value is 4.85. Similarly, it has a high role in influencing female well-being as well for which the mean value is 4.69. 'Job insecurity' is the list influences factors for both female and male well-being. The mean value of both female and male choice of 'job insecurity' are 3.16 and 2.25 respectively.

For the second part of the Likert scale questions the following questions are asked " (1) when I am not emotionally well I cannot perform well, (2) when I am not happy with my working environment it directly affects my work performance, (3) when I am not

happy with my salary level it affects my work performance, (4) when my family and society do not support me it affects my work performance, (5) overall, when I am not happy with what I am doing it affects my work performance.’’ In order to give a clear understanding of responses to all the above questions, a table is presented with the respondents’ degree of agreement or disagreement with the mean value.

**Table 2.** Mean for five variables: 1, strongly disagree through to 5 totally agree.

<b>Answer options</b>	<b>Mean Value</b>
<b>When I am not emotionally well I cannot perform well</b>	5.79
<b>When I am not happy with my working environment it directly affect my work performance</b>	5.60
<b>When I am not happy with my salary level it affect my work performance</b>	6.60
<b>When my family and society do not support me it affect my work performance</b>	5.77
<b>Overall, when I am not happy of what I am doing it affect my work performance</b>	5.89

Based on the table ‘’ when employees are not happy with their salary level’’ has a significant effect on their work performance (6, 60), which is followed by ‘’when they are not happy with what they are doing (5.89). Whereas, ‘’ when they are not emotionally well’’ and ‘’when their family and society do not support them’’ have an equal effect on their work performance for which the mean value is 5.79 and 5.77 respectively. In contrast, ‘’ when they are not happy with the working environment’’ this affects their work performance whose mean value is 5.60.

As mentioned above, in order to get in-depth understanding of the research question 10 semi-structured interviews were conducted with spa managers. The interviews were not very effective due to the long distance, huge time differences between Nepal and the author’s place of residence, and poor internet connection. Despite those obstacles, the author was able to collect necessary information.



While talking about spa managers' personal background out of 10 spa managers 3 are female, and 7 are males. , these people are the owners of the spa but at the same time they are handling the management by themselves. The entire female managers has a bachelor's degree and they have 7 years of work experience in this field, whereas, the male managers have a Masters degree but in a different field and they also have 7 to 8 years of work experience in this field.

Both male and female manager mentioned that “ *happiness and well-being are not the things that are nice to have; they are essential*”. When employees are in a positive state of mind, that's when human minds can explore, and connect with people and provide excellent services. They also highlight that employee- wellbeing is not only important for individuals but is it important for the organization as well. Additionally, they point out that “ *employee well-being is the core for their organization because the organization business depends on their employee performances*”. They also realized that if they want to be a leading organization first of all they have to take care of their employee well-being. The following question was asked to know the supporting programs they have been practicing to maintain employee well-being in the work place. However, they mention that they do not have any precise programs just to increase employee well-being, but they organized social parties like staff picnics, outings once a year. They celebrate staff birthdays, recognized employee outstanding job performance, and provides job-related training. On the other hand, they also mention that “ due to various peoples' opinions and behaviors, it is difficult for them to sustain any programs. For example,” *employees show their interest in staff party, picnic and so on, but when we organized no one wanted to participate, he or she gave many reasons for not attending the events.*” Additionally, they say that each employee has certain motivation to work with us, and we cannot meet individual needs especially when it will not benefit the organization. Therefore, even though they recognized the importance of employee well-being, however, they are putting a little effort to maintain it within a working environment.

In consideration of employee well-being, when asked how often they practice employee well-being programs, the majority of managers said not very often. Apart from social parties, training, job appreciation, and outings, actually they do not know any program

that they can implement to improve employee well-being; that clearly shows that managers are not qualified enough to manage their employees effectively.

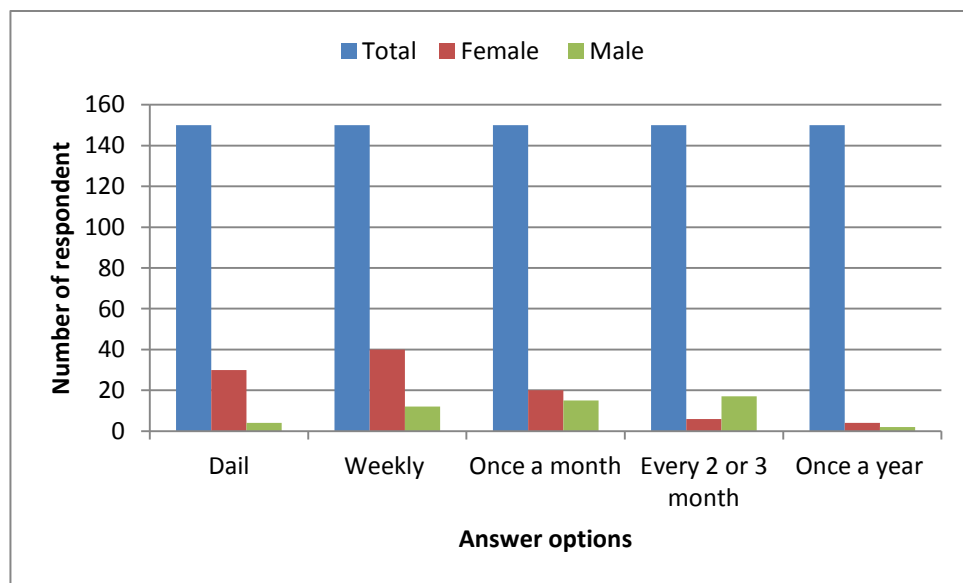
The next question was about the working environment, concerning the question ‘‘how do you define your working environment?’’ They mention that their working environment is not perfect, but employees can work without any trouble. In addition, when asked is there any open space for employees to rest, eat and for social gathering? They said No; there is no space (e.g. a small changing room for female employees to change their clothes). The manager said that, ‘‘ yes it is important for them to have a place to rest, eat and chat with their co-workers. However we do not have enough space for guests so how could we create another space for our employees.’’ Additionally, they came here to work not to chat with people. However, they reveal that they try to make their working environment-friendly and convenient for them an employee.

Additionally, to know their employee reaction ‘‘either they are happy with current working environment or not’’; the manager mentions that it is difficult to generalize because some of the employees are super happy and some are not. So they did not say much about this question. The next question was about how they deal with the employees when they saw them unhappy and not motivated towards work. A number of managers said ‘‘ *they do not like it when employees bring their personal issues into the work place and ruin the services.*’’ *If it constantly happened they asked them to take a day off and came to the work when they are fine*’’. However, if it is work related problems they can easily talk to the managers about the issues, and they will think what they can about it. The last question was ‘‘have you faced any problem due to employee ill-being’’. The manager answered ‘Not really’’. Few managers said ‘‘ we are human beings and it is obvious that we have several problems, so if we saw that our employees are not ready to give good service we ask them to take leave, and pressure goes to other employees, due to this sometimes it hard to give good service and maintain the quality of service simultaneously.

Hence, during the interviews the authors noticed, even though initially they mentioned that employee well-being is essential for them, but interestingly they do not know how to practice it in a daily working environment.

Apart from spa therapists and managers, the author included some guests as well in order to evaluate whether they are satisfied with the given services. Out of a total 150 respondents, the number of male respondents is way more than females with respective percentage 67% (100) and 33% (50). The obvious reason for male respondents outnumbering females is because more males visit the spa than females. There were no questions about nationality and age groups.

In the first question, the author was trying to understand how often people visit wellness and spa centers. The result of the survey report is presented in the bar chart below



**Figure 8.** Frequency to visit wellness and spa centers according to responses by gender n (150)

From the above bar chart, it can be seen that the majority of male respondents visit wellness and spa centers weekly and on a daily basis that is 27% and 20% respectively. A small minority number of male respondents visit wellness and spas once a month that is 13% and an insignificant numbers of male respondents visit wellness and spa centers every 2 or 3 months and once a year, which consist of 4% and 3% respectively. In contrast, the majority of female respondents visit wellness and spa centers every 2 or 3 months and once a month that is 11% and 10% respectively. Whereas a small majority of female respondents visit wellness and spa centers once in a week that is 8% and an insignificant number of female respondents visit wellness and spas on a daily basis and once a year that is 3% and 1% respectively.

Based on the respondents it is clear that people like to visit wellness and spa centers.

The next 3 questions were related to overall satisfaction of the guest, the following questions were asked ‘’ (1) Overall, I am very satisfied with the spa services, (2) I felt very relaxed after massage, (3) based on my experience I will recommend this spa to my friends and family.’’ The mean values were calculated based on respondents answered which are shown in the graph below.



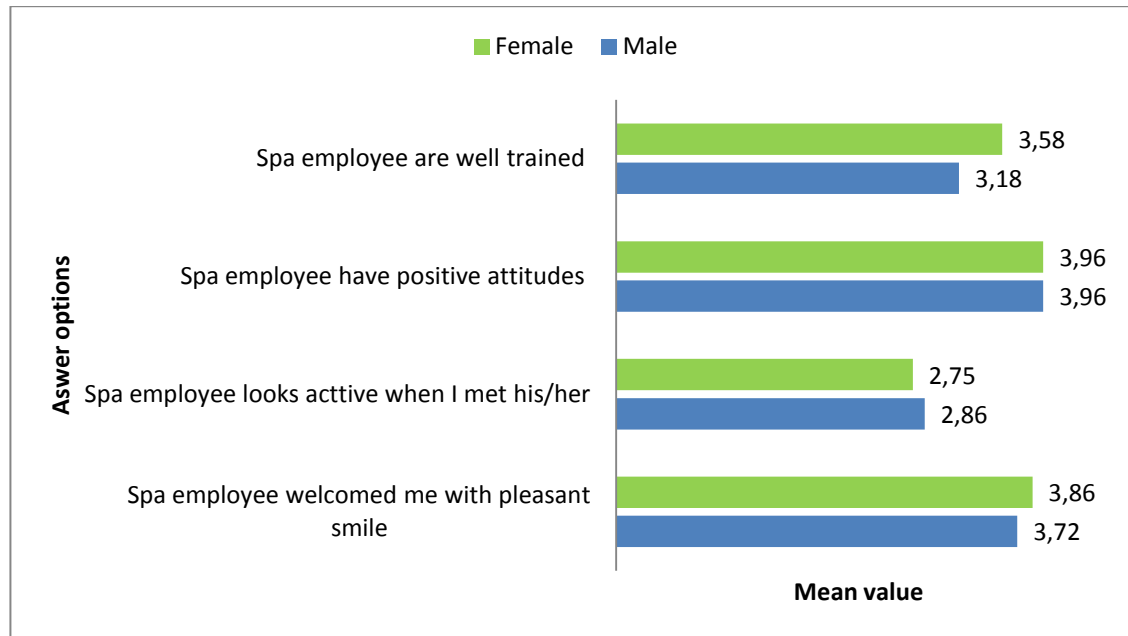
**Figure 9.** The mean value of respondents' agreement and disagreement by gender n (150)

Based on the above figure, both males and females were overall satisfied with the spa services but male guests were more satisfied than female guests. Whereas, a high number of female guests agreed that ‘’they felt relaxed after the massage’’ than male guests. A significant number of female guests will consider recommending this wellness and spa center based on their experience compared to male guests.

Overall, except a few respondents the majority of respondents were happy with the wellness and spa services.

The next four questions were related to guests' feelings about employee attitude, and behaviors towards them. The following questions were asked ‘’(1) Spa employee welcomed me with a pleasant smile, (2) Spa employee looked active when I met him

/her, (3) Spa employees have a positive attitude, (4) Spa employees are well trained.’’ The mean values were calculated based on the respondents’ level of agreement and disagreement. The results are shown in the bar chart below.



**Figure 10.** The mean value of respondent’s agreement and disagreement by gender (n=150).

Based on the chart, both male and female respondents were equally agreed that ‘‘spa employees have a positive attitude’’ for which the mean value is 3.96 for both genders. Whereas, a significant number of male and female respondents highly agreed that ‘‘spa employees welcomed them with a pleasant smile’’ the mean value is 3.86 and 3.72 respectively. While a considerable number of male and female respondents were agreed that ‘‘spa employee are well trained. In contrast, very few respondents’ agreed that ‘‘spa employee looks active when they meet him/ her.’’

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the survey showed that the majority of wellness and spa employees are female as compared to male that is also found by Deery and Iverson (1996). They have a minimum level of education that is not related to the wellness and spa field. However, they had taken six months to one year of massage training course and on average they have five years of work experience which is not good enough. According to Westwood (2009) employee soft skills would be sufficient in the hospitality industry. However, Bolton (2004), Bjurstam and Cohen (2008:364), Lloyd (2005), and Smith and Puzko (2009:18) argue that wellness and spa employees need to look, sound, and behave in a manner that is compatible with the requirements of the job and with the expectation of the customers and high skills are essential. Therefore, it is fundamental for Nepali therapists to upgrade their knowledge and skills in order to meet high demand.

The majority of employees usually work 9 hours per day and during peak season they work 13 hours a day, six days a week. It clearly shows that they spent most of their time at work that is also stated in Hater et al. (2002). Therefore, the workplace is largely related to maintaining an individual's well-being. As this research shows, as compares to the one who works in the international arena the majority of employees who work in Nepal provides 12 treatments per day, and female therapists provide more treatments than male therapists because mostly males visit the spa, and they prefer female therapists. It shows that they have long duty hours and high job demands that are not good for the employee well-being. Brinkam (2002), Fortes-Ferreira et al. (2006), and Schabracq et al. (2003) mention that high working hours and high job demand has a negative impact on employee well-being. Hence, several authors (Malina and Jaradat 2011), (Minciu 2001), Overbeck (2012), Nickson (2007), Pasaoglu and Tonus (2014), and Lynch (2002) discuss the importance of employee well-being for the individuals as well as the importance of their role in the success of the industry and also in delivering the right services. Therefore, it is essential to maintain healthy working hours in the Nepali wellness and spa industry.

The main reason to work as a spa therapist is because of the 'economic hardship' for both male and female respondents. Moreover, a few respondents mention 'passion'.

Whereas, the respondents who work in an international environment say that their main reason is “passion” followed by ‘economic hardship’. The numbers of employees were also not happy with what they are doing. Their “economic condition” and “hard to find the jobs” has become an obligation for them to work as a spa therapist. As the CIPD’s annual survey (2006) identifies that when employees are not happy with what they are doing they are more likely to be absent from work. Based on a guide to well-being at work (2006) an employee is more likely to be unhappy and dissatisfied when they are not happy with what they are doing, which has a significant impact on employee performance and service quality (Ajala 2013). Therefore, it is important for the Nepali wellness and spa industry to hire only those who are highly motivated to work in the wellness and spa industry. They can also motivate current employees and enhance their interest towards their work.

Many therapists mention that they were making their physical health worse by providing several treatments in one day and emotionally affected when guests share their pain and sorrow similar to their life story. In contrast, interestingly they were a number of therapists who mentioned that this is a very good place to work in terms of money and career if they are qualified and have a profound knowledge of what they are doing. As Joyner (2015) explains the skills required for wellness and spa employees to offer quality services without affecting employee well-being. Therefore, in the context of Nepal it is essential for the wellness and spa employees to learn different skills and techniques to provide good services without affecting their well-being. Additionally, employers should maintain appropriate working hours and job demand.

The results show that, in general, Nepali society considers the wellness and spa industry as an unclean workplace. Working as a spa therapist is not prestigious jobs in Nepal. In addition, the majority of employees’ parents do not give full support. Sharma and Black’s (2001) interview with therapists in the UK also mention that spa therapists are frustrated by the lack of respect for their profession. Since, Bryson et al. (2014), Page et al. (2008), and Ryan and Deci (2001) discuss that in this current situation not only the work place influences employee well-being; family support, social acceptance, social actualization, social value, and personal fulfilment are the most important to enhance employee well-being.

That is found in this research also, so those who got support from their family are making tremendous progress in their career. The author of this paper is also one example because her parents care and support that she is studying a Masters Degree in the wellness and spa industry. Moreover, she wants to take an initiative to change the negative concepts of the Nepali society around the wellness and spa industry. Hence, the spa industry, SWAN, and other hospitality associations like NTB, and HAN have been working to change this image. However, they have to be more effective and educate the large number of people.

Bryson et al. (2014) and Page et al. (2008) state that low salary and financial factors are the secondary factors that influence employee well-being. In contrast, in the context of Nepal low salary, and no financial bonuses, benefits, and incentives are the major factors that influence employee well-being significantly. Whereas, unmanaged work life, unhealthy conception of spa therapist job status, and family oppose are also the major factors that influence employee wellbeing which is declared in Bryson et al. (2014), and Keyes (2002). On the other hands faking actually feelings and performing roles in accordance with mandated company rules and regulation, lack of knowledge, and bullying and harassment are the second highest factors that influence employee well-being in the context of Nepal. Brunetto (2014), Chan (2011), and Hochschild (1998) also discussed how these multiple roles and feigned emotions that create certain impressions can be psychologically taxing and can negatively affect individuals' psychological well-being and even lead to burnout. Whereas, Sharma and Back's (2001) and Littke (2013) highlight how bullying and harassment affect employees' well-being and several scholars such as Baum and Lokstone-Binney (2012), Bolton (2004), Joyner (2015), and Smith and Puzko (2009) discuss wellness and spa employee skills and qualifications.

Many authors discuss HRM rules and regulations, working conditions and interpersonal relationships like Bono and Ilies (2006), Noblet et al (2008), and Armastrong (2009) as major factors to influence employee well-being. However, in the case of Nepal those factors are not the major factors, and very interestingly, interpersonal relationships is the list influence factor that influences the employee well-being in the context of Nepal.



The majority employees said that “when they are not happy with their salary level”, “when they are not happy with what they are doing” and “when they are not emotionally well” they cannot perform well. Whereas “working environment”, and “family and society unsupported” do not affect their work performance as much.

All Spa Managers realized the importance of employee well-being. However, they are not practicing many effective programs that help to improve employee well-being except a staff picnic once a year, celebrating birthdays, and job appreciation. On the other hand, they do not provide good facilities to the employees within their working environment. A number of the manager said that they do not allow employees to ruin the services by bringing their personal issues. Therefore, based on the managers’ answers employee ill-being does not directly impact on their services. However, absenteeism can be problematic for them to give good service and maintain the quality of the service at the same time. However, based on employee responses if they are not happy with what they are doing then it may affect the services. Maybe they are not expressing it for the time being, but it will be hard to hold those feelings for a longer period. Therefore, this is the time for spa managers to understand their employees and try to take small steps everyday to maintain their well-being. So in this way they maintain their employee well-being and upgrade the business. Based on Grilbreath et al. a (2004) managers’ behavior within the workplace has a huge influence on employee well-being. However, Mueller and Lee (200) argue that supervisors do not manage all employees, in the same way because the quality of ‘social exchange’ differs depending on the employee involved. Allen, Shore, and Griffenth (2003) also mention the same thing. Therefore, not only managers but employees also need to take an incentive to be liked by managers and create a healthy working environment. So it is both managers’ and employees’ responsibilities to maintain a quality working environment. While looking at guest feedback, the majority numbers of guests were happy with wellness and spa services. They felt that employees have a positive attitude, and they were welcomed with a pleasant smile. However, only a small number of guests said that employees are well trained and look active.

## CONCLUSION

The study set out to find the major factors that influence employee well-being and how it affects the services in the context of the Nepali wellness and spa industry. The main reason and motivation for this study is because the wellness and spa industries have grown over the years and wellness and spa services have become a way of maintaining or improving the overall health of the majority of people. They want to maintain their health and balance between body, mind, and spirit with the help of wellness and spa treatments. Therefore, the rapid growth of wellness and spa industries demand a distinct range of skilled and qualified employees.

The wellness and spa industry depends heavily on human resources. The literature provides evidence that human resources play a significant role when it comes to wellness and spa personnel. However, people management in the context of wellness and spa industry is a highly neglected area and raises a variety of issues in the context and delivery of services in the sector.

Nepal has great potential to offer a wide range of wellness and spa services. However, the Nepali wellness and spa industries are not yet developed. The Nepali society has traditionally viewed the wellness and spa industry as an unclean workplace. Additionally, in general, the working conditions and working environments do not favor employee well-being. Due to this fact people who work in the wellness and spa industry have been facing several problems that influence the individual's well-being that directly and indirectly affects the services that are the foundations of the industry. On the other hand, there has not been any research on employee well-being in the wellness and spa industry in the context of Nepal. Therefore, this study has sought to identify the major factors that influence employee well-being and how it affects the services in the context of Nepal. The outcome of this thesis can help the Nepali wellness and spa industry better understand employees' needs and requirements. The findings can also be used as tools to maintain the general well-being of employees in the context of Nepal.

The results from this research reveal some of the major factors that influence employee well-being and how it affects the services in the context of Nepal. The outcome of the

research agreed with some of the academic literature, and some outcomes are slightly different from the literature.

Very interestingly, number of female employees is higher than the male employees, even though the perception of women working in the spa sector is negative in Nepal. There is a high job demand (physically, and psychologically) and low rewards (i.e. poor salary, and low work support). Regarding respondents' perceptions, a large number are not happy with what they are doing due to many factors such as lack of respect and value, family opposition, long working hours, high job pressure, and society's overall view of the profession. In general "economic hardship" and "can not find a job" became major factors for them to work as a spa therapist. In the context of Nepal, salary and financial bonuses are the most important factors for their well-being that is followed by quality work life, high job status, and family support. The secondary factors are authenticity, healthy working environment, and knowledge and skills. Whereas, "interpersonal relationships" are not very important for them to maintain their well-being.

Almost all managers realized the importance of employee well-being. However, they are not implementing any effective programs that help to enhance employee well-being, which shows that employee well-being is neglected in wellness and spa centers in Nepal. It is very interesting to know that, even though, the employees are not happy with what they are doing this has no huge impact on services. According to the managers, only absenteeism is a major problem for them to maintain the quality of services. Apart from that, except for a few guests the majority of guests were happy with wellness and spa services. However, guests felt that employees are not well-trained, and they look exhausted, which somehow affects the service quality.

The main reason to receive this result may be that the research method for managers and guests was not entirely representative because no manager would admit that "they are not taking care of their employees" that is why their service quality is diminished. Therefore, if participant observation methods could have been used as a research method, then the result might be different from now.

When interpreting the results of the study, it is important to take its limitation into consideration. Firstly, the limitations are connected to the size and type of sample. The sample for this study was convenience that potentially brings some bias to the results. Additionally, the research deals only with a small sample group in 5 spas in Nepal. Because of its small size, the sample is hard to generalize to the large population in Nepal. Furthermore, there are only 20 spas in Nepal; so, the result could have been more realistic if the author had had time to cover all of the spas in Nepal. Secondly, the distance was another limitation of this study. Due to the huge distance the author was unable to make in-person contact with the sample groups. Thirdly, the research method for managers and guests was not very successful which is explained above; due to this fact the question on how employee ill-being affects the final services was not answered properly. Lastly, all the literature used in this paper are not directly related to the Nepali wellness and spa industries because so far not much academic research has done on the Nepali wellness and spa industry. Additionally, wellness and spa industry is a new concept in Nepal. Overall, the aim of this thesis is partly achieved through the chosen research methods but with some gaps and limitations.

In general, the condition of spa employee well-being is not ideal. Based on the manager's interview it seems that manager's lack to enhance the employee well-being in the context of Nepal. Additionally parents and society are also not supporting the spa employees. Therefore, the following suggestions could help to improve employee well-being.

1. The wellness and spa industry could present themselves as a prestigious working place in the context of Nepal. At this moment, most of the wellness and spa industry objectifies women's bodies and their beauty as marketing and promotional tools. This hints that the customer is getting more than a simple massage. On the other hand, it also contributes to the negative image of women working in the industry. Therefore, women's bodies and beauty should not be a major focus while promoting the wellness and spa services. Instead, the industry could highlight the benefits of wellness and spa services, and how it maintains peoples' over well-being.

2. Based on the results the majority of employees are not happy with what they are doing. Many research proved that when employees are not happy with what they are doing, there is a significant impact on individual's well-being, as well as employee performance and service quality. Therefore, it is essential for the individual to figure out the job they enjoy the most and should work there. Additionally, the wellness and spa industry should hire the people who are highly motivated to work in this industry. On the other hand, in case of Nepal people are obligated to work as a therapist because of economic conditions and hard to find other kind jobs. Therefore, in this case, individual should learn to appreciate their job since the job is helping them in their hard situation.
3. It is noticed that there are high job demand and low salary and rewards. Therefore, the salary level should be appropriate. The bonuses and rewards should be presented when necessary.
4. As manager mentioned in an interview that there was no appropriate space for the employee. Therefore, wellness and spa center should provide the space for the employee where they can eat, relax, discuss, and work
5. There is no any specific program that influences employee well-being. Therefore, the manager should take the initiative to organize different well-being programs for the employee. For example:- nutrition seminars and healthy food weeks, reward packages, health and safety, stress and mental health, return to work after maternity leaves, harassment and bullying, and good health well-being awareness sessions, and perhaps organized complimentary massages that employees exchange amongst themselves.

In order to change the society's narrow concept, the main thing is to spread education and knowledge. The set patters and ways of doing things have been set such a long time; it is almost impossible to change this thought within a few years. However, it can be changed if the Wellness and Spa Association of Nepal and other hospitality associations spread awareness of the industry.

Additionally, they can organize monthly awareness programs that cover one city of Nepal each month and tell people about the importance of the industry. Also tell them the potential that Nepal holds to become a wellness destination and how all Nepalese

could economically benefit from this industry. It is also important to involve local people to make them feel that they are part of this industry. Additionally, the Government of Nepal could help the spa association to build wellness and spa education schools so that people get an education about the wellness and spa industry like other professions (.i.e. doctors, nurses, and teachers).

Based on the research process the author realized that employee well-being in the workplace is not only about spa managers' or spa owners' responsibilities; but also the responsibilities of all individuals who are associated with this industry. For example, when an organization provides everything needed by employees and if employees take it for granted and vice versa, they will never be able to maintain the well-being of anyone neither organization nor employees. Therefore, everyone needs take care of his/her energy that he or she bring to the workplace. They must be aware of what they are doing and why they are doing it. Additionally, family and society have equal responsibilities to maintain employee well-being especially in the context of Nepal. Therefore, it is essential for them to change their negative and narrow views and encourage their children to do their best, allow them to grow and be a part of their life.

Why is employee well-being important? What are the factors that affect employee well-being? How can we maintain employee well-being? It has been talked about for many decades but in general people are not ready to take on the responsibilities. Usually, people complain about what they do not have and forget to appreciate what they have. Many research outcomes are only limited in words and hardly implemented practically. Therefore, now the time has come looking at what individuals can do to maintain the well-being of themselves and well-being of their organization. This is the time to take responsibility and think in a way of possibility rather than what is not, and maintain the status quo for what is not working. Future research could look into "what individuals could do to maintain their well-being, as well as their organization's well-being in context of wellness and spa industry."

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1. Wellness and Spa services

Wellness and Spa Services	Descriptions
<b>Beauty and anti-aging</b>	Includes products and services that enhance self-image (Salons, toiletries, personal care products, dermatology ), defy age and age-related healthy issues
<b>Fitness and mind-body exercise</b>	Includes gyms/health clubs, personal training, yoga, pilaties, tai chi, fitness and exercise clothing and equipment
<b>Healthy eating, nutrition and weight loss</b>	These includes the vitamins and supplements, functional foods/nutraceuticals, health foods, natural and organic food, weight loss and diet service providers and advisory services, foods and meal services, anti-obesity prescription and over the counter drugs.
<b>Preventive /personalized health</b>	This includes medical services that focus on treating ‘’well’’ people, preventing disease, or detecting risk factors (e.g. routine physical exams, diagnostic/screening tests). Also included in this sectors are the approaches that are typically done by conventional medical providers (e.g. genetic /molecular/environment screening, analysis and diagnostics, disease management services, electronic records, remote patient monitoring)
<b>Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM)</b>	The diverse medical, health care, holistic and mentally or spiritually-based systems,

	practices and products that are not generally considered to be part of conventional medicine or the dominant health care system (e.g. homeopathic, naturopathic, chiropractic, traditional Chinese medicine, Ayurveda, meditation)
<b>Wellness tourism</b>	Refers to person travelling to another city/region (within their country) or to another country to pursue holistic, preventive or lifestyle-based services that enhance personal well-being. It concludes providers of services to wellness tourists- essentially, anything included in the definition of the wellness cluster, but specifically targeting wellness tourists, along with the lodging, food, shopping and other services supporting these tourists
<b>Spa</b>	The core spa industry includes all types of spa operations, as well as spa consulting, spa media, associations and events, spa capital investments.
<b>Medical Tourism</b>	Refers to persons travelling to another city/region (within their country) or to another country in order to receive medical, surgical or dental care including invasive diagnostic and therapeutic procedures primarily because the care is more affordable, of higher quality or more accessible. The medical tourism sector includes any providers or services to medical tourists during their trips (e.g.

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hospital/clinic/doctor, the accommodation during the trip, food, shopping )

**Workplace wellness**

Includes programs offered by companies and businesses aimed at improving the health and wellness of employees in order to reduce costs and enhance productivity and performance. These programs raise awareness, provide education, and offer incentives that address specific health risk factors and behaviors (e.g. lack of exercise, poor eating habits, stress, obesity, and smoking) and encourage employees to adopt healthier lifestyles.

## Appendix 2. Types of spa and description

Spa	Description
<b>Day/Club/Salon spas</b>	<p>Facilities that offer a variety of spa services (e.g. massage, facials, body treatments) by trained professionals on a day-use basis. They typically offer private treatment rooms and a quiet and peaceful atmosphere. *club spas are similar to day spas, but operate out of facilities whose primary purpose is fitness.</p> <p>*Salon spas are also similar in nature but operate out of facilities that provide beauty services (e.g. hair,make-up, nails).</p>
<b>Destination Spas and Health Resorts</b>	<p>Offer a full-immersion spa experience in which all guests participate. All inclusive programs provide various spa and body treatments along with a myriad of other offerings such as fitness activities, healthy cuisine, educational classes, nutrition counseling, weight loss programs, preventive or curative medical services, mind/body/spirit offerings,. Because of their similar business structures (e.g. overnight stays in which all guests participate in full-immersion spa and wellness-based activities), traditional European style-health resorts and Indian Ayurvedic resorts are included in the same category as destination spas.</p>
<b>Hotel/ Resort Spas</b>	<p>Similar to a day spa, but the spa facility is located within a resort or hotel property. Unlike destination spas, at hotel/resort spas services are typically paid for on an a la carte basis, and meals are not included. Spa</p>

	treatments and services generally complement a hotel stay or a wide range of other activities at a resort.
<b>Medical Spas</b>	A spa facility that operate under the full-time, on-site supervision of a licensed health care professional. These provide comprehensive medical and /or wellness care in an environment that integrates spa services with traditional or alternative medical therapies and treatments.
<b>"Other" spas</b>	<p>This encompasses all other spas that are not captured by the above categories, and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historically/culturally-based spas (e.g. European bath houses and saunas, Japanese onsens and sentos , Turkish-style hammams, Indian Ayurveda centers, Thai massage establishments )</li> <li>• Mobile Spas (i.e. spa services are provided on-site at a customer's home or workplace)</li> <li>• Single service spas (similar to a day/club/salon spa, but specializes in a single service such as massage and facial)</li> <li>• Cruise ship spas</li> <li>• Mineral/hot springs spas (i.e day-use facility with an onsite source of natural mineral, thermal or sea water that is used in spa treatments; accommodation is not provided )</li> </ul>

### Appendix 3. Description of well- being components

By (Van de Voorde 2009, 41)

Well-being type (Number of data points )	Operationalization (Number of studies )	First author study (references number)
Happiness (25)	Satisfaction	Riordan (26) Zeng Zhou (41) Khilji (17) Vanhala (36) Gould-Williams (11) Hoque (15) Varma (37)
	Commitment	Riordan(26) Van Veldhoven (38) Wright (39) Ahmad (1) Paul (24) Ramsay (25) Wright (40) Gould-Williams (11) Hoque (15)
	Commitment combined with satisfaction	Nishii (21) Orlitzky (22) Vandenberg (35)
	Engagement	Salanova (29)
	Attitudes	Godard (9) Godard(10) Katon (16) Park (23) Guest (13)
	Trust	Tzafrir (3x) (34) Collins (5) Orlitzky (22) Frenkel (6) Gould-Williams (2x) (11)
	Work Climate	Bartel (2) Gelade (8) Rogg (27), Ruiz-Moreno(28)

Relationships (22)		Fulmer (7) Schuster (31)
	Morale	Truss (33)
	Cooperation	Collins (5) Lambooij (18)
	Team/Company processes	Mathieu (19) Miller (20) Paul (24)
	Social exchange	Tackeuci (32)
Health (8)	Strain	Van Veldoven (38) Orlitzky (22) Ramsay (25)
	Workload	Chander (4) Ruiz-Moreno (28) Truss (33)
	Work intensification	Orlitzky (22)
	Emotional	Vanhala (36)
	Exhaustion	



## Appendix 4. Questionnaires for Spa Therapists

### 1. Physical aspects

- a) How many hours per week do you work?
- 54 Hours
  - 60 Hours or more
  - 66 Hours
  - 72 Hours
  - 78 Hours
  - 84 Hours and more
- b) In an average given day, how many treatments do you provide?
- 1-4 Treatments
  - 5-8 Treatments
  - 9-12 Treatments
  - 13 more

### 2. Emotional aspects

- c) You are working as a therapist because
- a) You are passionate about this profession
- b) You feel obligated (i.e. due to economic hardship)
- c) You can't find another type of job
- d) It is easy to find the job in Wellness center
- e) If you have any other reason, please specify
- d) How do you view your profession?
- .....
- e) How do your parents view your profession? (Please specify)
- .....
- f) How does society or your community view your profession? (Please Specify)
- .....

### 3. Psychological Aspects

g) To what extent do you think the following aspects has a role to influences your well-being

1-Totally disagree 2-Disagree, 3- Neither agree nor disagree, 4- Agree, 5-Totally agree

Answer Options	1	2	3	4	5
Working Condition (e.g. tight rules and regulation, high expectation, and so on)	1	2	3	4	5
Long Working Hours	1	2	3	4	5
Interpersonal relationships within the workplace	1	2	3	4	5
Culture and work place environment	1	2	3	4	5
Human Resource Management Rules and Regulation	1	2	3	4	5
Low Salary Level	1	2	3	4	5
Job Insecurity	1	2	3	4	5
No financial bonuses, benefits and incentives	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of your own skills and knowledge	1	2	3	4	5
Fake your actual emotions and performs roles in accordance with mandated company rules and regulation (smile all the times, energetic all the time even when you are tired, and so on)	1	2	3	4	5
Unmanaged Work Life	1	2	3	4	5
Unhealthy conception of spa therapist job status	1	2	3	4	5
Bullying and Harassment	1	2	3	4	5
Family Oppose	1	2	3	4	5

f) To what extent do you think the following aspects have a role to influence your work performance?

1-Totally disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neither agrees nor disagrees, 4- Agree, and 5-Totally Agree

Answer Options	1	2	3	4	5
When I am not emotionally well I cannot perform well	1	2	3	4	5
When I am not happy with my working environment it directly affect my work performance	1	2	3	4	5
When I am not happy with my salary level it affect my work performance	1	2	3	4	5
When my family and society do not support me it affect my work performance	1	2	3	4	5
Overall, when I am not happy of what I am doing it affect my work performance	1	2	3	4	5

#### 4. Personal details

Name:-

Which year you born:-

Nationality:-

Gender:-

Company Name:-

Work Experiences in wellness and spa industry :- (1-2 years) (3-4 years)  
(more than 5 years)

Education level:-

Specific education/ training as a spa personal:-

## Appendix 5. Manager's Interview Questionnaires

1. How do you describe importance of employee well-being in context of your organization?  
.....
2. Can you describes, what kind of supporting programs do you have to enhance employee motivation?  
.....
3. And how often do you practice those programmers?  
.....
4. How do you define your working environment?  
.....
5. Do you have space for employee to rest, eat and for social gathering?  
.....
6. What do you think, to what extent your employee is happy with current working condition?  
.....
7. When your employee personal issues affect the services, what do you do at that situation?  
.....
8. Have you faced any problem due to employee ill-being?  
.....
9. Personal details  
Name:-  
Age:-  
Nationality:-  
Gender:-  
Company Name  
Work Experiences in wellness and spa industry :- (1-2 years) (3-4 years)  
(more than 5 years)  
Education level:-  
Specific education/ training as a spa personal:-

## Appendix 6. Guest Questionnaires

1. How often do you visit the spa?
  - Daily
  - Weekly
  - Once a month
  - Every 2 or 3 month
  - Once a year
2. Overall, I am very satisfied with the spa services
  - Strongly Disagree
  - Somewhat Disagree
  - Neither Agree nor Disagree
  - Somewhat Agree
3. I felt very relaxed after massage
  - Strongly Disagree
  - Somewhat Disagree
  - Neither Agree nor Disagree
  - Somewhat Agree
  - Strongly Agree
4. Based on your experienced will you come to this spa again and recommend to your friends and family?
  - Definitely will
  - Probably will
  - Might or might not
  - Probably will not
  - Definitely will not
5. Spa receptionist welcomed me with pleasant smile
  - Strongly Disagree
  - Somewhat Disagree
  - Neither Agree nor Disagree

- Somewhat Agree
  - Strongly Agree
6. Spa Therapist looks active when I meet her /his
- Strongly Disagree
  - Somewhat Disagree
  - Neither Agree nor Disagree
  - Somewhat Agree
  - Strongly Agree
7. The spa employees have positive attitudes
- Strongly Disagree
  - Somewhat Disagree
  - Neither Agree nor Disagree
  - Somewhat Agree
  - Strongly Agree
8. The service representative are well trained
- Strongly Disagree
  - Somewhat Disagree
  - Neither Agree nor Disagree
  - Somewhat Agree
  - Strongly Agree

Please specific your Gender

M ☐

F ☐

## SUMMARY

### सारांश

यस थिसिसको शिर्षक “नेपाली वेलनेश र स्पा उद्योगको सन्दर्भमा वेलनेश र स्पा उद्योगमा सेवा प्रदान गर्ने कर्मचारीहरूमा कुशलताको महत्व” हो । यस अध्ययनले नेपाली वेलनेश र स्पा उद्योगमा कर्मचारीहरूको कुशलतामा प्रभाव पार्ने प्रमुख कारणहरू र त्यसले दिइने सेवामा कसरी असर पार्छ भन्ने कुरा देखाउँछ । बढ्दो समय संगसंगै वेलनेश र स्पा उद्योगहरू पनि बढ्दै छन् र धेरै मानिसहरूले वेलनेश र स्पाको सेवा तथा सुविधालाई स्वस्थ जीवनयापनको रूपमा पनि लिने गर्नुनै यस अध्ययनको प्रमुख उद्देश्य हो किन भने उनीहरू वेलनेश र स्पाको उपचार माध्यमद्वारा स्वास्थ्य तथा तन, मन र आत्मालाई सन्तुलनमा राख्न चाहन्छन् । त्यसैले, वेलनेश र स्पा उद्योगको तीव्र गतिमा भइरहेको वृद्धि संगसंगै निश्चित शीप तथा योग्यता भएका कर्मचारीहरूको माग पनि बढ्दो छ ।

वेलनेश र स्पा उद्योग मुख्यतया मानविय स्रोतमा निर्भर रहन्छ । वेलनेश र स्पा उद्योगको सन्दर्भमा मानविय स्रोतले महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निर्वाह गर्ने कुरा पुराना अध्ययनहरूले पनि सावित गरेको छ । तर पनि यसको व्यवस्थापन पक्ष अतिनै बेवास्ता गरिएको क्षेत्र हो र यसले पेशामासेवा सुविधा प्रदान गर्ने क्रममा थुप्रै नकारात्मक असरहरू निम्त्याउँछ ।

नेपालसंग वेलनेश र स्पा सम्बन्धी सेवा प्रदान गर्न सक्ने ठुलो क्षमता भएता पनि यो उद्योग अबै नेपालमा फस्टाउन सकेको छैन । नेपाली समाजले अबै पनि यस उद्योगलाई पुरानै दृष्टिकोणले हेरेको छ र फोहोरी कार्यस्थलको रूपमा लिन्छ ।

समग्रमा भन्नु पर्दा कामकाज गर्ने अवस्था र वातावरण कर्मचारीको कुशलता अनुकुल छैन । यसै कारण यस उद्योगमा काम गर्ने व्यक्तिहरूले धेरै समस्या भोगिरहेका छन् र फलस्वरूप यसको प्रत्यक्ष वा अप्रत्यक्ष असर उनीहरूले प्रदान गर्ने सेवामा पर्छ जुन सेवा भनेकै यस उद्योगको आधार हो । नेपालमा वेलनेश र स्पा उद्योगमा काम गर्ने कर्मचारीको कुशलतालाई लिएर अहिले सम्म कुनै पनि प्रकारको अनुसन्धान भएको छैन । त्यसैले, यस अध्ययनले कर्मचारीको कुशलतामा प्रभाव पार्ने प्रमुख कारणहरू पत्ता लगाई त्यसले दिइने सेवामा कसरी असर गर्छ भन्नेकुरा प्रष्ट्याउन खोजेको छ । यस अध्ययनबाट निस्केको नतिजाले नेपाली वेलनेश र स्पा उद्योगहरूलाई आफ्नो कर्मचारीहरूको चाहना र आवश्यकताको बारेमा बुझ्न सहयोग पुऱ्याउँछ । यस अध्ययनबाट प्राप्त भएको नतिजालाई नेपालमा काम गर्ने कर्मचारीहरूको कुशलता कसरी कायम गर्ने भन्ने एउटा माध्यमको रूपमा समेत प्रयोग गर्न सकिन्छ । यो अध्ययको उद्देश्य

- ❖ नेपाली वेलनेश र स्पा उद्योगहरूमा वेलनेश र स्पा सम्बन्धी सेवा दिइने क्रममा कर्मचारीहरूको कुशलतामा प्रभाव पार्ने प्रमुख कारणहरू पत्ता लगाउनु

माथी उल्लेख गरे अनुसार वेलनेस र स्पा उद्योगमा मानवीय स्रोत बेवास्ता गरिएको पक्ष हो । यस थेसिसले अहिले भएका वेलनेस र स्पा उद्योगहरूमा कर्मचारीहरूको कुशलता सम्बन्धी ज्ञान र स्पा उद्योग बीच जुन दुरी रहेको छ त्यसलाई कम गर्न सहयोग गर्छ । यस थेसिसले कर्मचारीहरूको कुशलतामा प्रभाव पार्ने मुख्य कारणहरूलाई नजिकबाट नियाल्नुको साथसाथै यसबाट पर्ने असरहरूको रूपरेखा समेत निकाल्ने छ ।

यस स्नातकोत्तर थेसिसको उद्देश्य प्राप्त लागी मिश्रित विधि अपनाएर नेपालको पाँच प्रचलित र स्तरिय स्पाहरूका प्रबन्धक, थेरापिष्ट र ग्राहकहरूलाई लिएर यो अनुसन्धान गरिएको हो । यस अनुसन्धानमा तथ्यांक जम्मा पार्नको लागी खुल्ला प्रश्नावली, बन्द प्रश्नावली र अर्ध संरचनात्मक अन्तरवार्ता विधि प्रयोग गरिएको छ । लक्षित समुहमा जानको लागी सम्भाव्यता रहित पाएक छनोट विधि को प्रयोग गरिएको छ । जम्मा १०० कर्मचारी र १५० ग्राहकहरूले प्रश्नावली भरेका थिए भने १० जना स्पा प्रबन्धकको स्काईपद्वारा अन्तरवार्ता लिईएको थियो ।

यस थेसिसको मुख्य र प्रथम अध्यायको पहिलो भागले वेलनेस र स्पा उद्योग र कर्मचारीको कुशलता सम्बन्धि सैद्धान्तिक पृष्ठभूमी र पुराना अध्ययनहरूमा जोड दिन्छ जस्तै, वेलनेस र स्पा उद्योगको विस्तृत रूपमा वर्णन गर्छ । पुराना अध्ययनहरूको दोस्रो भागले वेलनेस र स्पा उद्योगमा मानवीय स्रोतको महत्वको बारेमा र तेस्रो र चौथो भागले कर्मचारीको कुशलता र उनीहरूमा कुशलताको वास्तविक बुझाईको बारेमा जोड दिन्छ । यसको अन्तिम भागले कर्मचारीको कुशलता मा प्रभाव पार्ने कारणहरूमा ध्यान दिएको छ ।

यस थेसिसको दास्रो अध्यायले छनोट गरेको अध्ययन पद्धतिमा जोड दिन्छ । साथै अध्ययन प्रक्रिया र विधिको बारेमा छलफल, आंकडा संकलन प्रक्रियाको वर्णन र आंकडाको विश्लेषण प्रस्तुत गर्दछ । त्यसैगरी, तेस्रो भागमा प्राप्त गरेको नतिजा चित्रण र अध्ययनको छलफल गर्छ । तेस्रो भागले यो अध्ययनको निष्कर्ष, पत्ता लागेको कुराको प्रस्तुती, केहि सिमितता, कर्मचारीको कुशलताको लागी र आगामी दिनमा गरिने अनुसन्धानको लागी केहि सुझावहरू रहेको छ । यस थेसिसको अन्त्यमा सन्दर्भसूची, परिशिष्ट र नेपाली भाषामा अनुवाद गरिएको सारांश रहेको छ ।

यस अध्ययनको नतिजाले कर्मचारीहरूको कुशलतामा प्रभाव पार्ने प्रमुख कारणहरू र नेपालको सन्दर्भमा यसले कसरी असर गर्छ भन्ने कुराको व्याख्या गर्छ । यस अध्ययनको कतिपय परिणामहरू पुराना अध्ययनहरूसंग मिल्दो जुल्दो छ भने कुनै धेरै फरक कुरा पनि पाइएको छ ।

तर अचम्म लाग्दो कुरा नेपाली समाजमा स्पा क्षेत्रमा काम गर्ने महिलाहरूप्रतिको दृष्टिकोण नकारात्मक हुदाहुदै पनि यस क्षेत्रमा काम गर्ने संख्यामा पुरुषहरूको भन्दा महिलाहरूकै संख्या बढि रहेको पाईयो । यस उद्योगमा कामको माग (शारीरिक तथा मानसिक) ज्यादा र पारिश्रमिक तथा दिनु पर्ने सुविधाहरू जस्तै तलब वा कामप्रतिको प्रोत्साहन ज्यादा न्यून छ । त्यसै गरि उत्तरदाता को हेराईमा स्पामा काम गर्ने धेरै मानिसहरू विभिन्न कारणहरू जस्तै कामको न्यून कदर, काम प्रतिको मूल्य, पारिवारिक असहयोग, लामो



समय काम गर्नु पर्ने बाध्यता, कामको धेरै चाप र समाजको काम प्रतिको दृष्टिकोण लगाएतका कुराहरुले गर्दा आफुले गरेको काम प्रति खुशी हुन सकेका छैनन् । समग्रमा भन्नु पर्दा “आर्थिक कठिनाई” र “रोजगारीको कम पाउनु ” नै स्या थेरापिष्टको रुपमा काम गर्नु पर्ने प्रमुख कारणहरु हुन् । नेपालको सन्दर्भमा कर्मचारीको कुशलता भनेको तलब र आर्थिक लाभांश नै प्रमुख हो र त्यस बाहेक पनि गुणस्तरिय कामकाजी जीवन, कामको उच्च स्तर र पारिवारिक सहयोगले पनि महत्वपूर्ण भुमिका खेल्छ । अतिरिक्त कारणहरु जस्तै कामको आधिकारिकता, स्वस्थ काम गर्ने वातावरण, ज्ञान र शीप हुन् भने अन्तरव्यक्तिक सम्बन्धलाई कुशलताको लागि खासै महत्व दिईएको पाईएन् ।

अन्तरवार्तामा सबै प्रबन्धकहरुले कुशलताको महत्वको बारेमा कुरा गरेता पनि उनीहरुले कर्मचारीहरुको कुशलताकै लागि सहयोग गर्ने खालको कुनै प्रभावकारी कार्यक्रमहरु लागू गरेको भने पाईएन् । यसबाट पनि नेपालका वेलनेस र स्या केन्द्रहरुमा कर्मचारीको कुशलतालाई बेवास्ता गरिएको कुरा प्रष्ट हुन्छ । तर यसमाअझ रोचक कुरा के हो भने कर्मचारीहरु आफूले गरेको काम प्रति खासै खुशी नभएता पनि यसको असर काममा भने पटकै देखिएको पाईएन् र प्रबन्धकहरुले जनाए अनुसार कर्मचारीहरु गयल हुने एक मात्रै यस्तो समस्या हो जसले सेवाको गुणस्तरमा समस्या पुर्‍याईरहेको छ । यस अध्ययनमा कोहिकोहि बाहेक धेरैजसो ग्राहकहरु वेलनेस र स्याको सेवामा सन्तुष्ट भएको पाईयो र उनीहरुका अनुसार कर्मचारीहरुमा तालिमको कमी छ र थकित पनि देखिन्छन् यसले गर्दा सेवाको गुणस्तरमा कुनै न कुनै रुपमा प्रभाव पारिरहेको पाईयो ।

यस अनुसन्धानमा प्रयोग गरिएको विधिमा प्रबन्धक र ग्राहक पुरै रुपमा प्रतिनिधि नभएको कारणले गर्दा पनि यो नतिजा प्राप्त भएको हुन सक्छ । किनभने कुनै पनि प्रबन्धकले आफ्नो कर्मचारीलाई बेवास्ता गरेको वा ध्यान नदिएको कुरा खुल्ला रुपमा व्यक्त गर्दैनन् र त्यसले गर्दा पनि सेवाको गुणस्तर घट्दो छ । यदि, अनुसन्धानकर्ताले आफै सहभागी भएर अवलोकन गर्ने विधि प्रयोग गरेको भए नतिजा अहिलेको भन्दा फरक पनि निस्कन सक्थ्यो ।

स्याका कर्मचारीहरुको कुशलता भनेको काल्पनिक अवस्था होईन । प्रबन्धकहरूसंग भएको अन्तरवार्ताको आधारमा नेपालको सन्दर्भमा उनीहरुले कर्मचारीहरुको कुशलता बढाउनमा कमी गरेको देखियो । त्यसको साथसाथै समाज र परिवारले पनि स्यामा काम गर्नेहरुलाई सहयोग नगरेको देखियो । त्यसैले, निम्न उल्लेखित सुझावका बुँदाहरुले कर्मचारीको कुशलतामा सुधार ल्याउन मद्दत गर्न सक्छ

१. नेपालको सन्दर्भमा वेलनेस र स्या उद्योगले आफुलाई राम्रो कार्यक्षेत्रको रुपमा प्रस्तुत गर्न सक्छ । अहिलेको अवस्थामा यस उद्योगले महिलाको शरीरलाई र सौन्दर्यलाई बजारीकरण गर्दा वस्तुको रुपमा प्रयोग गरिएको र यसले गर्दा स्यामा आउने ग्राहकहरुले सामान्य मसाज मात्रै नभई अरु कुरा पनि प्राप्त गर्ने गरेको कुराको संकेत गर्छ । अर्को कुरा, यसले यस क्षेत्रमा काम गर्ने महिलाहरुको नकारात्मक छविको

बनाई दिन्छ । त्यसैले वेलनेस र स्पा उद्योगहरूले यसको प्रचारप्रसार गर्दा महिलाहरूको शरीर र सौन्दर्यलाईमात्र प्रयोग गर्नु हुँदैन । त्यसको सट्टामा यस उद्योगहरूले वेलनेस र स्पाको फाईदा र मानिसको कुशलतामा यसले कसरी प्रभाव पार्छ भन्ने कुरामा ध्यान दिनु पर्छ ।

२. प्राप्त नतिजाको आधारमा धेरैजसो कर्मचारीहरू आफूले गरेको कामप्रति खुशी छैनन् । अन्य अनुसन्धानहरूबाट पत्ता लागे अनुसार कर्मचारीहरू आफूले जे काम गरेको त्यसमा खुशी वा सन्तुष्ट नहुँदा त्यसले व्यक्तिको कुशलता, काम गराई र सेवाको गुणस्तरमा समेत प्रभाव पार्छ । त्यसैले हरेक व्यक्तिले काम गर्दा आफूले रमाउदै खुशीसाथ गर्न सक्ने काम गर्न जरुरी हुन्छ । वेलनेस र स्पा उद्योगहरूले पनि यस क्षेत्रमा काम गर्ने प्रबल इच्छा भएका व्यक्तिहरूलाई मात्र काममा नियुक्त गर्नु पर्छ । नेपालको सन्दर्भमा आर्थिक कठिनाई र अन्य काम पाउन गाह्रो हुने समस्याको कारणले पनि मानिसहरू स्पा थेरापिष्टको रूपमा काम गर्न बाध्य छन् । कामले पनि मानिसहरूलाई कठिन परिस्थितिमा सहयोग गर्ने हुनाले आफूले गरेको कामको सम्मान गर्नु पर्छ ।

३. यस क्षेत्रमा कामको उच्च माग तथा कम तलब र कम प्रोत्साहन भएको देखिएको छ । यस कारण कर्मचारीहरूलाई उचित तलब दिनु पर्छ । आवश्यक परेको बेलामा लाभांश र उचित प्रोत्साहन दिनु पर्छ ।

४. अन्तरवार्ताको क्रममा प्रबन्धकले उल्लेख गरे अनुसार कर्मचारीहरूको लागी कार्यालयमा फराकिलो ठाउँ नै छैन । त्यसैले वेलनेस र स्पा केन्द्रहरूले कर्मचारीहरूको लागी खान, आराम गर्न, छलफल र काम गर्न मिल्ने स्थानको व्यवस्था गर्नु पर्छ ।

५. कर्मचारीहरूको कुशलतामा प्रभाव पार्ने कुनै विशेष कार्यक्रम नै छैन । त्यसैले प्रबन्धकहरूले कुशलताका कार्यक्रमहरू आयोजना गर्नु पर्छ । उदाहरणको लागी, पोषण सम्बन्धि गोष्ठी, स्वस्थ खाना सप्ताह, प्रोत्साहनको लागी कार्यक्रमहरू, स्वास्थ्य र सुरक्षा, तनाव तथा मानसिक स्वास्थ्य, सुत्केरी विदा पछि पुनः काममा फर्किने, दुव्यवहारका र हेपाई, असल स्वास्थ्य र कुशलता सम्बन्धि जनचेतनाको कार्यक्रम । र अतिरिक्त मसाज साटासाट जसमा कार्यालयकै कर्मचारीले एकअर्कालाई गर्न सहज होस ।

समाजको यस पेशा प्रतिको संकुचित धारणा परिवर्तनको लागी ज्ञान र शीपमूलक जानकारी फैलाउने । समाजमा यस सम्बन्धि विचार धेरै पुरानो भएको हुदां यसलाई छोटो समयमै परिवर्तन गर्न असम्भव छ । तर त्यति हुँदाहुँदै पनि नेपालका वेलनेस र स्पा उद्योग को साथसाथै अरु अतिथि सत्कार (हस्पिटालिटी) संघहरूले पहल गरेमा यस पेशा सम्बन्धि रहि आएको विचारमा परिवर्तन ल्याउन सकिन्छ ।

यसको साथसाथै एक महिनामा एउटा सहर पुरै समेटने गरि यस क्षेत्रको महत्वको बारेमा मासिक जनचेतना जगाउने र उनीहरूलाई नेपालमा यस उद्योगको अत्याधिक क्षमता भएको र यसले नेपालीहरूको आर्थिक समुन्नति हुने कुराको जानकारी दिने । स्थानियवासीलाई पनि यस उद्योगको एउटा पाटो भएको

कुरा महसुस गराउन उत्तिकै जरुरी हुन्छ । नेपाल सरकारले पनि वेलनेस र स्पा सम्बन्धी कुरालाई विद्यालयको पाठ्यक्रममा समावेश गराउन स्पा सघलाई सहयोग गर्ने जस्तै डाक्टर, नर्स र शिक्षण पेशालाई पाठ्यक्रममा राखिएको हुन्छ ।

अनुसन्धानको प्रक्रियाको आधारमा लेखकलाई यस्तो महसुस भएको छ कि कार्यालयमा कर्मचारीको कुशलता भनेको स्पा प्रबन्धक वा स्पाको मालिकको मात्रै दायित्व नभएर यस उद्योगमा संलग्न सबैको हो । उदाहरणको लागि कुनै संस्थाले कर्मचारीहरूलाई चाहिने सबै कुरा प्रदान गरेको र कर्मचारीले त्यसलाई महत्व दिएन वा कर्मचारीले गर्दागर्दै पनि संस्थाले महत्व नदिएमा न त संस्थाको न कर्मचारीकोनै कुशलता कायम हुन्छ । त्यसैले सबैजनाले कार्यस्थलमा आफ्नो सक्दो क्षमताको बारेमा ध्यान दिनु पर्छ र आफूले के र किन गर्दैछु भन्ने कुरामा सजग हुनु पर्छ । अझ विशेष गरी नेपालको सन्दर्भमा परिवार र समाजको पनि कुशलता कायम गराउनमा उत्तिकै दायित्व रहन्छ । त्यसैले यस पेशा सम्बन्धी संकुचित धारणालाई परिवर्तन गरि आफ्नो सन्तानलाई अघि बढ्न हौसला प्रदान गर्नु पर्छ ।

कर्मचारीको कुशलता किन महत्वपूर्ण छ । के के कारणहरूले गर्दा कर्मचारीको कुशलतामा असर पर्छ । यस कुराको चर्चा परिचर्चा धेरै दशक अघि सुरु भएता पनि मानिसहरू आफ्नो दायित्व निर्वाह गर्न तयार नै छैनन् । अक्सर गरेर मानिसहरू आफूसंग भएको कुराको सराहना गर्न विर्सेर नभएको कुरामा असन्तुष्ट हुन्छन् । धेरै जसो अनुसन्धानहरू पनि लिखितमा मात्रै सिमित र सायदै व्यवहारिकतामा लागू भएका छन् । व्यक्तिले आफ्नो र आफ्नो संस्थाको कुशलता कसरी कायम गर्न सकिन्छ भनेर हेर्ने समय आइसकेको छ । यो समय भनेको आफ्नो दायित्व वहन गर्ने र नभएको कुरामा भन्दा सम्भावनाहरूमा ध्यान दिने र के ले काम गरेको छैन त्यसलाई यथास्थिती मै कायम गर्ने । आगामी अनुसन्धानहरूले “व्यक्तिले आफ्नो कुशलताको साथसाथै संस्थाको कुशलता कसरी कायम गर्न सक्छ भन्ने कुरामा ध्यान दिन सक्छ” ।

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